

# An External Evaluation of Phat Pak Process and Structure

Volume 1: Evaluation Report

***Prepared for***

Phat Pak  
Governance Group  
Waikato

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

An evaluation was conducted by the 510 Evaluation Research Group 2007 after receiving a request from the Phat Pak Governance Group (PPGG). The evaluation focused on four areas identified in the Phat Pak service specification plan attached to it's Ministry of Health contract (Youth Participation, Communication Strategies, Decision Making Processes and Skills Development).

Phat Pak has undergone a range of changes since its inception in 1999; a major one being the introduction of the Governance Group. In recognising that previous evaluations had targeted outputs that focused on specific events, this evaluation was to focus on the Phat Pak programme in general with emphasise being placed on the regular day to day delivery of the programme. With this information in mind, the team embarked on a process evaluation of Phat Pak since the introduction of the Governance Group.

There is a plethora of literature highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of different models of governance, youth participation, communication strategies as well as decision making and skills development processes. While much of the literature within this report is drawn from overseas models, their relevance to a New Zealand context, and more specifically Waikato context is still clear.

Our intention of evaluating the Phat Pak Programme has been to, through feedback from a range of participants, gauge the extent that the programme objectives (such as those highlighted in the contract are being met. More specifically, the function of the evaluation has been to help identify specific areas that are working well and those areas that need further development. It is our intention that the evaluation will provide both short and long-term direction with added insight towards increasing participation and enhancing health outcomes for youth and the wider community of the Waikato region.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Clarity of Governance and Management Roles

Revisit previous training in governance models that clearly distinguish board roles from management roles and to continue working towards this ideal. The evaluation team feel that it will also be important to document and track progress towards the determined governance model.

## A Youth Voice at Governance

To address the need for ensuring a youth voice is present in governance decisions, we recommend establishing a youth advisory group. This may be achieved by utilising existing structures to perform a similar function. In establishing the advisory group Phat Pak need to be clear whether its purpose is as a youth **advisory group to Phat Pak** or as a **regional representative** youth advisory group to region providers.

## Youth Participation

In recognising that some aspects of participating in governance group meetings simply cannot be made ‘fun’; there are a range of ways the governance group can manage the process as a whole. Some suggestions we offer include:

- Find ways to take the meetings to the youth in places they are more comfortable that are located at their region(s)
- In the short-term plan the agenda so where youth input on items is desired, these are clustered together so attendance is only needed for part of the meeting. A long term-strategy would be to aid youth to be actively involved for the entire meeting.
- Consider ways to financially resource youth to attend (eg. travel allowance, attendance fee, scholarships to go to youth leadership conferences overseas etc)

### Clarity of Mission, Goals and Objectives of Phat Pak

Undertake a process of developing and clarifying a mission statement that can be easily stated by each member of the Phat Pak project is needed.

### Participating with Confidence in Phat Pak and beyond

Establishing and implementing a strategic plan in skills development to address the project objectives will address the need for new members to be supported into their roles.

### Clarity in Communication

Developing an agreement for practice related to email communications would assist decisions determining who should receive information, be involved in decisions, and what is required of recipients. The development of a Phat Pak website would be valuable for disseminating information widely and will raise the profile.

### Accountability Obligations & Risk Management

Develop templates for (1) an update from service providers to be completed and sent to the coordinator and (2) a risk-management strategy that provides a clear step-by-step process to follow in case of emergencies during events.

### Public Profile of Phat Pak and Youth

To address the desire for Phat Pak to have a more visible public profile, we support the following suggestions from various interviewees:

- Increase the amount of community events promoting Phat Pak.
- Establish an online forum or website uniquely dedicated to the Phat Pak project.
- Establish training events for Phat Pak crews to engage with media.
- Explore the feasibility of an advertising campaign.

meeting with representatives from various Ministry departments with youth portfolios to brainstorm ways of optimising each other's efforts could produce benefits such as streamlining interagency communication, and ensuring all youth-related groups (both NGO and non-NGO) are equally informed of activities and developments occurring in the community.

In addition, holding event(s) with Phat Pak crews to celebrate/share/present their activities with families, funders, and other agencies on a regular basis will help reaffirm the great work that has taken place.

# GLOSSARY

Auahi Kore	A social marketing campaign to promote a smokefree lifestyle.
Coordinator	This person is responsible for coordinating the activities of all Phat Pak crews throughout the region and for managing the day-to-day operations of the project.
Fono	Common term used throughout the Pacific Islands for a conference, gathering, council, or assembly.
Hui	A gathering of people for a specified purpose.
HYDT	Hamilton Youth Development Trust
Kaupapa	Purpose or aim.
PPPGG	Phat Pak Governance Group.
Marae	Can be a Māori cultural setting, that serves as a cultural institution; can be a setting which encompasses physical buildings and operates to facilitate cultural practices such as to ritualize everyday customs pertaining to Māori culture.
Mentee	Also known as a crew member. These are youth who are part of a crew that is guided by a mentor
Mentor	Someone who guides a crew and helps them plan and coordinate Phat Pak promotion events in the community.
Rangatahi	Age ranges can vary, but generally refers to people in the youth age group (approx 14-24years).
Tautoko	Support, guidance, advice (depending on context the word is used)
Te Ahurei	Abbreviated name for Te Ahurei a Rangatahi, a youth oriented programme in the Hamilton area.
Wānanga	A learning or training forum.
Whakamā	Shy, withdrawn or embarrassed.
WDHB	Waikato District Health Board

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The following evaluation report has been divided into five main chapters (introduction, method, results, discussion and recommendations). Attached separately to this report is also an appendices, which includes documentation produced as part of the evaluation). In an attempt to direct the reader to the key information within each chapter a brief outline of the key questions you may want to know is provided at the beginning. For example for this chapter the key questions that will be answered within this text are:

- ▶ What is this evaluation about?
- ▶ What is this evaluation going tell me about Phat Pak?, and
- ▶ Do the aims of Phat Pak match or align with the literature about other youth development programmes?

## PHAT PAK

The following section of the report provides a overview and description of Phat Pak (as understood by the evaluators).

### *Background*

The Phat Pak was originally developed as a summer holiday campaign for youth (age 14-24 years) over the Millennium New Year holiday period (December 1999 – January 2000). It was an Inter-sectorial Project that consisted of groups such as the WDHB – Community Health Services (now known as Population Health Service) Police, Family Planning Association, Aids Foundation and Road Safety Coordinators; that was established to encourage youth health and safety over this period. Previously identified major risk factors for youth health and well being were identified as

tobacco smoking, binge drinking, and sexual health issues, all of which were included in the Phat Pak resource that was distributed during the campaign.

A public health nurse from the Thames area was the key initiator of the project starting. After the group consulted with youth, it was decided that a resource would be developed to promote safe sex, safety with alcohol, smoke free, and safe driving. The resource was a credit card sized pack designed by youth from Thames High School with information about the health issues noted in the previous paragraph being written in language that appealed to youth; and contained a condom, a sachet of lubricant, and a packet of Smints (breath mints). These resources were then distributed amongst youth over the Coromandel and wider Waikato area during that summer holiday period.

The resource has subsequently been redesigned and redeveloped over the years – the latest Phat Pak resource was launched in 2006 – to suit the growing diversity amongst youth, and new attitudes and awareness of different issues.

However the objective of the resource has not changed: The promotion of youth health safety, by youth for youth.

In 2001, the Phat Pak expanded to include trained mentors and youth in the issues related to the Phat Pak, and those groups then went on to promote Phat Pak in their own regions in the greater Waikato by organising fun events for youth to promote the youth health and safety messages. This initiative has continued to include more Phat Pak crews, mentors and training wananga to attend, a coordinator employed to support the project mentors, and in 2005, the Governance Group was established to represent all of the organisations and people involved in the Phat Pak Project.

### ***Previous Evaluations***

There have been three previous evaluations of the Phat Pak Project: Two external and one internal evaluation. The first evaluation was based on the effectiveness of the

first youth summer holiday campaign during December 1999 and January 2000, and this was conducted in the months after the campaign, with surveys distributed to youth who had received the pack (see Kempson, 2001). The surveys covered issues such as what youth liked about the Phat Pak, and what they thought could be done to improve it. Overall the feedback was positive for the Project, and so the Phat Pak resource was redesigned and distributed to youth in the same areas over the 2000-2001 summer holiday period. This called for a second evaluation to be conducted in the months after the second campaign. Once again, the evaluation focused on the feedback from youth about the resource to ensure that the objectives of the Project were being achieved, but was conducted using focus groups. The feedback was also positive for the second evaluation, and so the initiative of the Phat Pak Project expanded to include trained mentors and crews in areas over the greater Waikato and Coromandel Peninsula in 2001 (see Kempson 2001).

The third and most recent evaluation was compiled by the Phat Pak Committee in 2003. Their evaluation looked at processes used to encourage youth participation in the Project, and how successful the Project was in contributing to youth development, youth message advocacy, and youth connectedness. Questionnaires were sent out to mentors and Phat Pak crews for the purposes of this evaluation, with positive feedback being received. The objectives of the 2003 report were to determine:

1. the success of the project in contributing towards youth development, advocacy and connectedness; and
2. the processes used in achieving youth participation and ownership and how these processes could be improved (Phat Pak, 2004, p.5).

This evaluation recommended that Phat Pak continue the provision of training hui and mentor support. As well, the report recommended the encouragement of

- rangatahi to take on roles of responsibility,
- parent support,
- Pacific Island youth participation, and
- wider promotion of the Phat Pak

## *Aims and Objectives of Phat Pak*

The goal of the Phat Pak project is to develop a social and physical environment that improves and protects the health of communities and groups, where the social environment may include political, economic, social and cultural factors and structures (Phat Pak, no date). The Phat Pak objectives are to:

- Encourage and work with communities using community action approaches to develop social initiatives that promote, improve and protect community health and wellbeing; and
- Reduce health inequalities by increasing communication skills, increasing participation in education and introducing life skills training (Phat Pak, no date).

It is the intention of the research team to incorporate these objectives into the framework of the evaluation project. Their relationship to the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (YDSA) is further explored in the following section.

## *Aim of the Current Evaluation*

The purpose of undertaking this evaluation is to understand the perceptions amongst people involved with the Phat Pak about the four key areas identified in the service specification document designed for Ministry of Health (Phat Pak, no date) – they are: Youth participation, decision making processes, communication strategies and skill development. Because previous evaluations have already been completed and subsequent changes implemented; the current evaluation will focus on the project since the establishment of the Governance Group structure in 2005, as no evaluation has been undertaken since that time.

## **A REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE**

This literature review is part of the final report to the PPGG in the evaluation research of the Phat Pak Project. The purpose of this review is twofold: The first is to provide the research team from the University of Waikato with background information and evidence to guide the process of our evaluation in best practice and ensure it is completed with efficiency and professionalism. The second purpose of this review is to make transparent to our client, that information and evidence which we referenced to guide our process and final recommendations.

The topics of review include the necessary background information of the Phat Pak Project, its development and function as well as the objectives and findings of previous evaluations prior to 2003. A section on the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (YSDA) follows the background information of Phat Pak as the strategy is and Phat Pak goals and objectives are closely linked. Those links are represented through four main themes: youth participation; communication strategies; decision making processes; and skill development. These four themes form the framework of the evaluation research within the context of a youth development programme and so the bulk of this review is dedicated to the literature around these four themes.

To complete the review we have referenced the literature which supports the methodology we have chosen to use in the execution of the evaluation project. This includes data collection methods of interviewing and surveys, archival research and naturalistic observation and focus groups. The advantages and disadvantages of the methods are discussed as well as their relevance to the Phat Pak Project and within the New Zealand context. Methods of data analysis are considered in relation to the data collection methodology.

In conclusion the literature is summarised to explain briefly the relevance of the literature to the overall recommendations in the final report.

## *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*

In 2002 the Ministry of Youth Affairs completed a process of consultation culminating in the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (YDSA). The purpose of the strategy is to promote a youth development approach to guide government and other organisations and agencies in their development of policy and programmes to ensure they address the needs of youth (defined as young men and women from 12 to 24 years).

The strategy comprises a vision and six principles which outline the youth development approach. According to the YDSA (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002) youth development:

1. is shaped by the big picture
2. is about young people being connected
3. is based on a consistent strengths-based approach
4. happens through quality relationships
5. is triggered when young people fully participate
6. needs good information

The service outputs of Phat Pak align with the goals of the YDSA and the service descriptions on the actions, which were “suggested by young people and adults who participated in the Ministry of Youth Affairs’ consultation process” (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002, p.28). In recognising the relevance of Phat Pak to the Ministry of Youth Affairs’ strategy we suspect the proposed evaluation will be of interest to the Ministry of Youth Affairs as well as the Ministry of Health (who are currently a funder).

## *Youth Development Programmes*

The Ministry of Youth Development (2003) reports that young people (aged between 12 and 24) spend more time than any other age group socialising outside the home, in informal settings such as the cinema and libraries or participating in physical activity, hobby and sports clubs. There is a long history and a significant number of community programmes both internationally and nationally which aim to support the development of youth. In Aotearoa New Zealand these range from traditional groups such as Guides, Scouts and youth service clubs, through to University based student associations and Iwi based youth programmes (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002).

Consider for example the international programme Outward Bound, established in Aotearoa New Zealand since 1962 delivering a range of outdoor physical activities such as sailing and rock climbing with the aim to support the development of self and social awareness (Outward Bound, no date). More recently programmes have been developed to meet specific youth community group needs based on ethnicity and sexual orientation among some. Rainbow Youth, for example, an organisation based in Auckland, offers support to Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Takataapui and Fa'afafina youth and their families through advocacy and education. Rainbow Youth aim to provide a safe environment for youth from these sexual orientations together and discuss issues that impact those (Rainbow Youth, 2003).

Programmes like Phat Pak, which focus specifically on health promotion, or the New Zealand Police 'Bluelight' programmes, working with at-risk youth, are less visible or well known. The New Zealand Police 'Bluelight' initiative provides a variety of activities and events such as Waka-ama challenges and Police Physical Competency Test competitions among schools. The intention of the activities is to reduce youth crime and promote police and youth relationships (Bluelight, 2006). The New Zealand Association of Adolescent Health and Development (NZAAHD), the national association supporting organisations who work with youth, aims to support better health outcomes for youth by connecting and networking member organisations, agencies and groups who work with youth (New Zealand Association of Adolescent Health and Development, 2005). Denny (2004) provides a summary of effective

youth health programmes in New Zealand however while he acknowledges that there is minimal data to evidence effectiveness this should not translate that current programmes do not work.

The health focus for many groups delivering programmes aims to address a widely held belief that unless young people experience good health they are unavailable to participate in educational and social opportunities which support their positive development. Indeed one of the drivers for the development of the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (YDSA) was the recognition that “over the past 40 years the youth population has not shared the health gains of other population groups” (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002, p 10).

The YDSA provides a useful framework for youth development programmes to develop and measure their outcomes as Phat Pak have demonstrated in the framing of their strategic plan. Phat Pak goals, objectives and service descriptions are closely aligned to the strategy (Phat Pak, no date; Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002). Additional support for the development and ongoing delivery of youth development programmes is provided through the Ministry of Youth Development service guidelines and funding schemes however, according to the Counties Manukau District Health Board, the YDSA and the Ministry of Health's youth strategies do not go far enough in terms of resourcing (Counties Manukau District Health Board, 2007).

Phat Pak's history of development describes the evolution of a local community health initiative into a full youth development programme. Youth participate at different levels of the organisation as recipients of the Phat Pak resource and as crew members, mentors, and governance members. As a youth development programme mentoring has been incorporated as a strategy to achieve the delivery of their health promotion messages. The needs and benefits in delivering a mentoring programme are described in more detail in a later section (Skill Development) suffice to say that appropriate structures are essential in order to achieve the best from this type of youth programme (Denny, 2004; DuBois, Hollaway, Valentine & Cooper, 2002).



## **FOUR EVALUATION PROJECT THEMES**

Four clear themes emerged from initial discussion and information sharing with the client. As discussed above these themes are significant to Phat Pak in terms of their goals and objectives as well as the strategic intent of New Zealand's youth Ministry. A selection of the relevant literature available on these themes: youth participation; communication strategies; decision making processes; and skill development; is discussed in the following sections.

### ***Youth Participation***

An important aim of this evaluation is to gauge the level of youth participation within the Phat Pak project. Youth participation has been identified as a primary goal for the Phat Pak organisation, where it is understood to be essential for the continued success of the programme (Peterson. D, Personal Communication, 19, May, 2007). As the Phat Pak initiative is oriented toward encouraging youth participation in the project; several key reasons act as indicators why youth might become involved in this initiative. These include among notions: a sense of citizenship; feelings of being included; a means to voice an opinion; and a chance to actively influence policy formation to suit youth affairs. Overviews of these elements will further emphasise the importance of having youth participate in this evaluation.

### **Youth Citizenship**

With regard to the idea of youth citizenship it should be viewed as a developmental process, inclusive of being exposed to problems or issues that affect youth populations. A very important marker for citizenship occurring within a young person is their ability to think outside of their personal needs, while showing concern for others. In addition, being involved with a larger group for the purpose of pursuing the common good is also important in the development of a sense of citizenship

(Flanagan & Van Horn, 2001; Larsen, 2000; Stoneman, Camino & Zeldin; cited in Sherrod, Flanagan & Youniss, 2002). In general citizens are people who actively engage in public affairs according to their political affiliations, and tend to monitor any process of governance to keep it honest and fair (Kasser & Ryan, 1993; cited in Sherrod, Flanagan & Youniss, 2002). To some degree, the same can be said of youth taking into consideration that cultural differences are in affect. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume youth participation in civic engagements is due to a perceived level of worthwhile return for them. Developing citizenship in youth is seen to have a roll-on effect for the development of responsible, independent, and caring adults, who in later years may contribute to society through constructive political engagement (Sherrod, Flanagan & Youniss, 2002).

### Youth Inclusion

The Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002) clearly articulates a number of aims, goals, and principles, which define youth aspirations toward having meaningful interactions with others. Constituting what is termed as inclusion, it indicates how social development occurs within an individual. As an example, a sign of social development might be shown as having positive relationships with family members; other youth; and professional acquaintances. Furthermore, it is demonstrated through the ability to participate in social forums that promote specific culture (Ministry of Social Development, 2002). Known also as user friendly communities, the process is usually initiated through the active involvement of an older experienced person, who may through mentoring, encourage the youth person to participate in a social setting. The concept of user-friendly communities is used in youth work, and facilitates inclusion through a process of encouragement. It is where an older person will apply themselves toward ensuring that a young person is enveloped in a community or setting. This is achieved in part through the older person negotiating a state of social inclusion for that younger person, in said community. Again, allowing them to feel as if they are included as a contributing member in the proceedings (Martin, 2002). As part of accounting for youth participation, social

inclusion offers interesting possibilities for conducting research.

### Being Able to Voice Opinions

An attractive reason why youth seek participation in community forums is to engage in voicing their opinions in matters that concern them. Youth culture thrives in forums which facilitate an opportunity to have a voice; to be taken seriously while being listened too; and being treated as true equals alongside adults (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002). In support the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989, cited in Mathews, Limb & Taylor, 1998), states clearly why the youth voice should be accepted as political capital. This is expressed through the following articles:

- Article twelve: supports the notion that youth have a right to express an opinion and have that opinion taken into account in any matter or procedure affecting them,
- Article thirteen: supports the right to freedom of expression, and
- Article fourteen: supports the right to freedom of thought.

These articles clearly validate a need for forums where young people can have their say free of negativity. Similarly, with regard to participation, article three of that same accord, focuses on ensuring the views and opinions of children are also treated with respect (Mathews, Limb & Taylor, 1999).

### Research and Policy Making

Much of the literature written on youth based research identifies a necessity for youth to be involved in the process. Youth participation in research is desirable for generating reflective policies which are meaningful for them (Wang and Burris, 1997, in Checkoway & Richards-Schuster, 2003). Active involvement will require true intergenerational partnerships between adults and youth, with an expectation that

youth presence is genuine and not a tokenistic assertion (Checkoway & Richards-Schuster, 2003). Also, youth participation may reflect unique perspectives which are needed within a research project. This is more pertinent if it involves a programme that offers a direct service to them (Zimmerman & Erbstein, 1999, in Checkoway & Richards-Schuster, 2003). Partnerships with universities is worthy of mentioning when considering youth participation in community research. There have been successful examples where youth have collaborated with university based researchers in projects to good affect. These have produced excellent forums resulting from exchanges between the parties (Fruedenberg, Roberts, Ritchie, & Taylor, 1999, in Checkoway & Richards-Schuster, 2003). If the level of power in research projects involving youth and adults is maintained at equilibrium, one can expect meaningful engagement to occur (Hart, 1997, in Checkoway & Richards-Schuster, 2003). Where, in order for young people to participate fully, in any research project, the researcher – participant relationship has to managed on an equal parity.

### Enhancing Organisational Effectiveness

In addition to the previous section it is worth pointing out that the inclusion of youth participation in an evaluation concerning a community organisation enhances its effectiveness. Involving young people in research creates multiple opportunities for improvement which include:

- An ability to plan for the inception of youth involvement
- The capacity to replicate successful practices for integrating youth participation
- A means to evaluate these ongoing processes
- To develop better and more appropriate adult competencies for working with youth
- Finally, to develop systems that provide core learning for mature and young people alike (Calvert, Zelden & Weisenbach, 2002).

The elements highlighted in this section emphasise why it is important to have youth participate in programmes and organisations as well as this evaluation. Within a research context such practice is conducive to allowing researchers to gauge the impact of youth focused practices within an organisation (Calvert et al., 2002) and so for this evaluation project, having youth participate in the research is important in terms of being able to gauge that within the Phat Pak Project .

### *Communication Strategies*

We are as reliant on communication as we are on air and water for our survival. Consider the example from Bolton (1987) where the death of a group of infants followed an experiment by Emperor Frederick of the Roman Empire in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century as he endeavoured to discover the language spoken at the birth of mankind. The infants were “isolated from hearing human speech from the moment of birth until they spoke their language. The babies were to be raised by wet nurses who were strictly charged to maintain complete silence when with the babies. All the conditions of the experiment were successfully carried out” (Bolton, 1987, pg 8) except the infants died.

Communication is more than an exercise in linguistics and incorporates the dynamics of relationships and interactions in a social context. It is not simply what we say but how we say it, the methods we choose, gestures we express, consciously or unconsciously, our tone of voice and body language. It involves the purpose and agenda of our message and how those messages are perceived by the recipient. It can be as quick as a wink and as Durie (2001) suggests has the power to contribute to the capacity building of a culture. Durie (2001) acknowledges the health benefits of Te Reo Māori as the pathway to “spirituality, traditional values, customs, and artistic expression” (p. 202) and as a means of building the capacity of the Māori culture. Language, verbal and non-verbal communication, conversation and discourse – defined as an “entire communicative event or episode located in a situational and sociohistorical context” (Vaughan & Hogg, 1998, p. 371), have been and will

continue to be topics of research for many years. Reviewing the range of literature about the dynamics of communication is beyond the scope of this review only in as much to reinforce that communication is a complex dynamic.

The relevance of communication to the evaluation project which this literature review supports is its place as a clearly defined objective of the Phat Pak Project. As stated above it is the goal of Phat Pak to support the improvement and protection of community and group health and one of their stated objectives to achieve this is through the development of communication skills (Phat Pak, no date). There is a clear relationship between the Phat Pak objectives and the YDSA as outlined above and other Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) documents such as their policy and guidelines for funded youth services (Ministry of Youth Development, 2006), which states explicitly an expectation that short term goals for young people as a result of having attended a funded programme include “increased relationship, communication and team work skills” (p.7).

The origin of Phat Pak and its continuing work includes the communication of effective health messages through the Phat Pak resource. With a target audience of youth it is important that methods to communicate the health promotion message is appropriate to youth. Since the Phat Pak organisation is a youth-focussed public health initiative, created by youth for youth, it makes sense to explore important means of communication by and among youth. Youth have been identified as major consumers of digital media technologies, such as the Internet and mobile cellular phones – for youth, these technologies are an effective way to establish and maintain social networks (Haddon, 2004).

Gallagher, Bagin and Moore (2005) argue that mass media such as the Internet is commonly thought of as a vehicle for transmitting a given message to many individuals at the same time – as public websites are able to be accessed by anyone with an Internet connection. Government departments and many social services in New Zealand have their own websites, and these are an effective way of communicating information to a mass audience, should they wish to view it. Research completed by Andy Williamson shows that “individuals who have Internet access use it innovatively and successfully to communicate, research, resource, engage and

promote community outcomes” (“Internet important for community, volunteer sector”, 2003).

It has been identified that Internet technologies are commonplace in many schools (Gallagher, Bagin & Moore, 2005), so it is likely that if youth who live in isolated areas may not have an Internet connection at home, they would be able to utilise the Internet at their local school. Goggin (2006) believes that mobile phones offer many possibilities for the coordination of activities among youth.

The Phat Pak organisation could benefit from harnessing communication technologies commonly used by youth, such as the Internet and mobile phones. This may help to better encourage youth communication and participation within the organisation.

### ***Decision Making Processes***

As is the case with any group or community, decision making is an essential task to progress the aims and goals of the group. Phat Pak is no exception to this fact. This section describes models of decision making and their significance to youth participation. Comparisons of models are highlighted and the behaviours described in these comparisons may support the analysis of the data collected in the evaluation research project.

#### **Facilitating Participatory Decision Making**

Kaner (1996) presents a comprehensive guide for facilitating group decision-making processes in a way that creates genuine participation and ownership from an organisation’s members, employees, and stakeholders. His model of participatory decision-making contributes to the creation of an environment where participants are able to make collaborative decisions, resolve their own conflicts, trouble-shoot, and self-manage. Kaner (1996) outlines (in table 1) the essential points of difference between his model and the conventional model of group decision-making and

provides explicit guidelines on how to practically implement values of full participation, mutual understanding, inclusive solutions, and shared responsibility. The value of *full participation* recognises the need for a psychologically safe environment in which members are comfortable voicing their “first-draft” ideas, where people can think out loud; the value of *mutual understanding* recognises the importance of members accepting the legitimacy of one another’s needs and goals; the value of *inclusive solutions* recognises that wise solutions are more likely to be found when everyone’s perspectives are integrated; and the value of *shared responsibility* recognises that people are more likely to stand accountable when they give input into a solution, and vice versa.

Table 1: Kaner’s comparison of participatory and conventional groups (1996: p. xiv).

<b>Participatory Groups</b>	<b>Conventional Groups</b>
Everyone participates, not just the vocal few.	The fastest thinkers and most articulate speakers get more air time.
People give each other room to think and get their thoughts all the way out.	People interrupt each other on a regular basis.
Opposing viewpoints are allowed to co-exist in the room.	Differences of opinion are treated as <i>conflict</i> that must either be stifled or “solved.”
People draw each other out with supportive questions. “Is <i>this</i> what you mean?”	Questions are often perceived as challenges, as if the person being questioned has done something wrong.
Each member makes the effort to pay attention to the person speaking.	Unless the speaker <i>captivates</i> their attention, people space out, doodle or check the clock.
People are able to listen to each other’s ideas because they know <i>their own ideas will also be heard</i> .	People have difficulty listening to each other’s ideas because they’re busy rehearsing what <i>they</i> want to say.
Each member speaks up on matters of controversy. Everyone knows where everyone stands.	Some members remain quiet on controversial matters. No one really knows where everyone stands.
Members can accurately represent each other’s points of view – even when they don’t agree with them.	People rarely give accurate representations of the opinions and reasoning of those whose opinions are at odds with their own.



People refrain from talking behind each other's backs.	Because they don't feel permission to be direct <i>during</i> the meeting, people talk behind each other's backs outside the meeting.
Even in the face of opposition from the person-in-charge, people are encouraged to stand up for their beliefs.	People with discordant, minority perspectives are commonly discouraged from speaking out.
A problem is not considered solved until everyone who will be affected by the solution understands the reasoning.	A problem is considered solved as soon as the fastest thinkers have reached an answer. Everyone else is then expected to "get on board" regardless of whether s/he understands the logic of the decision.
When people make an agreement, it is assumed that each decision still reflects a wide range of perspectives.	When people make an agreement, it is assumed that they are all thinking the exact same thing.

Kaner (1996) explains that practical application of the above table "requires a change of mindset – a committed effort from a group to swim against the tide of prevailing values and assumptions", and he recommends doing so with the guidance of a competent facilitator because, "left to their own devices, many groups would slip back into conventional habits" (p. xv).

Kaner's model of Participatory Decision Making seems culturally appropriate in that it is designed with some fundamental human needs in mind, i.e., a common human need for inclusion in decisions that affect ones daily life, as well as a common human need to be heard. With particular relevance for Māori, the model recognises the practical value of talking until everyone feels heard, and then moving onto the solutions phase, as described by Mead (2003). With relevance to the evaluation and the Phat Pak's seeking to increase youth participation in decision-making, the model serves to create an environment in which youth (and, indeed, anyone) feel safe contributing their "first-draft" ideas by providing a tool with which members can respectfully explore each other's comments and concerns, no matter how they are initially expressed.

## Enhancing Youth Participation in Governance

An anonymous person once said: “When I die, I hope it’s in a meeting. The transformation from life to death will be barely perceptible.” Unfortunately, many people involved in boards<sup>1</sup>, whether in private, governmental, or non-profit organisations, can well relate with this witty indictment of meetings. Highly-skilled people the world over often describe their experiences of governance meetings as ineffective and frustrating. This may very well be one reason why it is an ongoing challenge to motivate youth to participate in governance activities.

The kinds of issues faced by board members are few but common. Carver (1997, pp.9-10) outlines these issues as:

1. *Spending time on the trivial*, where board members practice what is commonly described as “micromanaging,” rather than retaining the unique board function of clarifying and maintaining the organisation’s vision and leaving the execution of the vision to management and staff.
2. *Short-term bias*, where, for example, more time may be spent in meetings discussing last month’s financial statement than on an organisation’s strategic position.
3. *Reactive stance*, where boards spend much of their time responding to action requests from staff rather than initiating proactive, vision-driven activities to be executed by staff.
4. *Reviewing, rehashing, redoing*, where board meeting time is spent internally focusing on monitoring staff work rather than actually leading the organisation.
5. *Leaky accountability*, where board members circumvent the CEO’s accountability by directly approaching staff members to take actions.
6. *Diffuse authority*, where the boundaries of authority given to board members and the CEO remain vague. This creates a situation where the board becomes the authority by default. Carver (1997) notes that many an opportunity is lost here to clarify exactly to whom the decision belongs.

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<sup>1</sup> While in the context of Carver’s work he uses the term Board to refer the role within an organisational context, the evaluation team still note the relevance of his work to the PPGG. Where reference to a board is used, this is often as it is referenced within Carver’s context, and is used with reference to the PPGG.

All of the above issues tend to produce what Gastil (1997) describes as “one of the most notorious problems of group decision making” – namely, long meetings, which tend to frustrate group members, decrease productivity due to bad decisions made by tired members, as well as reducing democratic processes. To address these common issues, Carver and Oliver (2002) present the model of “Policy Governance,” which is designed to assist boards in being powerful and visionary leaders while simultaneously empowering management to perform their unique function in the organisation in a creative and accountable way. Carver (1997), the primary developer of the Policy Governance model, draws on research that examines the challenges faced by board members the world over in optimising their own leadership potential and it provides guidance and training specifically designed for the unique role of the governance body. Such specialised training often is not provided for board members, who may be left to their own resources to discover the nature of their roles (Carver, 1997).

This model addresses the need for specialised training in skills related to board activities and therefore provides a pathway for youth development to enable greater participation in decision-making processes. With respect to cultural relevance, this model is based on consensus decision-making, which is recognised as a process commonly used in Māori communities (Mead, 2003) and which ensures everyone has an opportunity to contribute to the decision-making process.

The Policy Governance model has been described by Carver (2007) as;

*... a universally applicable set of principles upon which each unique board could develop its own governance.... When the fundamental truths are discovered, we can hold them constant while making uncountable variations built on them. One example is the marvelous variety in bridges even though they are all built on the same engineering principles.*

As such, it is principle focused rather than structure-focused and therefore cannot easily be captured in a simple diagram or table. This is because each organisation may apply the principles in a way that is unique to their own circumstances. To fairly describe it would exceed the practical scope of this literature review. However, this particular model has become increasingly popular since its development in 1996, and now it is gradually being adopted in many governance structures throughout New

Zealand. Examples are provided by school boards (“About Policy Governance,” 2006), the Ministry of Health (Governance Guide, 2007), Creative New Zealand (Getting On Board, 2003), Māori organisations (Whaia Ngā Taumata, 2006). Further guidance is published in book form and on the Internet at [www.carvergovernance.com](http://www.carvergovernance.com).

### Sociocracy

One final common issue identified is that of boards making decisions without sufficient practical input from the groups most affected by those decisions. This issue is addressed by Buck (2007), who developed the model of “sociocracy,” to support a decision-making model that “enables every sub-part of the organisational system to have a sovereign voice in the management of the organisation.” It ensures that decisions made at the board level are truly reflective of the lived experiences of those people in an organisation who are executing the board’s decisions. It is a governance model designed to support consensus decision-making and to ensure input and participation from people at every level of an organisation by making it possible for *anyone* within an organisation to participate actively in board level decision-making processes. This is achieved by the formation of semi-autonomous and self-organising circles of individuals comprising members from their own domain within an organisation as well as members from immediately related domains. For example, a management circle would include not only managers but also representatives from floor staff and governance (those two domains that are immediately affected, and have an affect upon, management operations). Thus, policies designed by management have input from both ends of the organisational spectrum when designing policies pertaining to their roles. Decisions are made by consensus, which is defined as “having no reasoned or paramount objections to a proposed decision.” The sociocratic method is based on four governing principles, which are described by Villines (2007) as:

1. Consent governs policy decision-making. Consent means there are no argued and paramount objections to a proposed decision.
2. Circles are the primary governance unit. Circles are semi-autonomous and self-organising within their domain. They make

policy decisions; set aims; delegate the functions of leading, doing, and measuring to their own members; and maintain their own memory system and program of ongoing development.

3. Circles are connected by a double-link consisting of the functional leader elected by the next higher circle, and two or more representatives elected by the circle, all of whom participate fully in both circles.
4. People are elected to functions and tasks by consent after open discussion.

These principles are used to form a governance structure that includes all levels within an organisation and protect the sovereign voice of every member through the principle of consent. As such, it provides a governance model that can encourage youth participation in Phat Pak governance processes, as well as providing a culturally appropriate model that is in harmony with common practices in Māori decision-making processes. Perhaps more importantly, it provides an opportunity not only for Māori but for *anyone* to have a sovereign voice in organisational decisions.

The scope of this literature review does not permit a complete description of the Sociocratic approach, as with the model of Policy Governance. However, it is mentioned as one possible example of how boards can increase participation in decision-making by all members of an organisation (Villines, 2007).

### ***Skills Development***

A certain level of skill and ability is required to participate, communicate, facilitate and coordinate the making of decisions as well as promote the health and well-being messages that organisations such as Phat Pak deliver. As the literature in the previous section suggests, adequate training and skill development is essential wherever a group gathers. Further to this, the following section outlines mechanisms of skill development, in particular mentoring programmes as this is a fundamental component of the Phat Pak Project.

## Youth Development

A significant review of the literature was undertaken in the development of the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa. While the literature review by McLaren (2002) predominantly references international research, there is an acknowledgement that to a certain extent and in various contexts international literature is transferable to the New Zealand context. The review highlights the developmental significance of adolescence as the period when youth place emphasis on their relationships with peers and “increase independence while maintaining closeness” (McLaren, 2002, p 22) with their parents as they move from childhood to adulthood. The key task of developing successful peer relationships is described as significant for outcomes later in life and specific skills development is suggested as a result of these relationships not only with same age peers but also with those younger and older. For example skills of leadership may be learned from someone younger while seeking assistance may be sought from older peers.

The review also acknowledges the significance of the school environment and the impact that success in this context has on moving into adulthood. Staying in school in itself requires a set of skills including “learning how to motivate oneself, persist and plan,” (McLaren, 2002, p 29) and if young people are able to achieve this they are often able to gain qualifications which lead to better employment opportunities. The mastery of analytical thinking and self-regulation are also key tasks in youth development. Beyond school the literature suggests that where youth are involved in activities outside of school, but not necessarily paid employment, they develop useful skills which may lead to better employment opportunities. Much of this review concentrates on the literature which describes the influence of peers and parents; however one section acknowledges the influence that other “very important” adults may have on young people. They include older siblings, aunts and uncles, grandparents and other adults who may influence behaviour and achievement of goals, particularly where youth experience other risk factors, toward positive outcomes (McLaren, 2002). Grossman and Bulle (2006) also consider the impact of ‘non-parental adult’ relationships both naturally occurring as well as relationships developed with adults through specific programmes such as extra-curricular activities

and mentoring programmes. They show that “in general, youth who find adults other than their parents to guide them through their adolescent years have better outcomes in terms of scholastic success, social-emotional wellbeing, connections to social capital, and risk-taking behaviour” (Grossman & Bulle, 2006, p 790). It should be emphasised here that these outcomes are relevant where those adults are positive role models. They refer to the significance of the development of resiliency by youth even through a short-term relationship with an adult during a key period when the young person is experiencing difficulties.

The goals of the YDSA reflect this research in their attention to the development of quality relationships and the recognition of how this supports youth development.

### Mentoring Programmes

The literature on the benefits of structured youth-adult relationships through mentoring programmes on positive outcomes for youth is growing, although again this is limited in terms of literature specific to New Zealand. Critical to the success of these relationships is the way the programme is structured to support the development of the relationship between the mentor and the young person. Effective mentors take time to develop the relationship by being consistent in their commitment to meeting with the young person (Sipe, 2002). Other significant characteristics of the mentor include a genuine attitude of respect and belief in the young person and the importance of facilitating their involvement and input into decisions about what they do within that relationship. Effective mentors also recognise that they don't know everything and seek support from their colleagues (Sipe, 2002).

Programme processes and structures can support the recruitment and retention of mentors who hold these characteristics through sound screening and recruitment processes, induction and ongoing training for mentors which highlights these effective practices in relationship development, and ongoing supervision and support of the mentors (Grossman & Bulle, 2006; Sipe, 2002). Sipe (2002) suggests that the most successful approach in the recruitment of appropriate mentors is “word of mouth”

as they are often aware through their association with others involved in the programme of what is involved and what their commitment needs to be.

### ***Conclusion***

The aforementioned literature was reviewed with the purpose to inform the evaluation research of Phat Pak and considers four key themes: youth participation; communication strategies; decision making processes; and skills development. Each of the themes on its own has relevance to the development and delivery of youth development programmes such as the Phat Pak Project. The literature demonstrates how collectively youth participation, communication strategies, decision making processes and skills development are interwoven and if achieved in combination will contribute to the goal of Phat Pak, through their health promotion programme.

The literature provides useful information to consider alongside the analysis. As we understand the text, the consistency of the message, significance of the themes and their relevance to each other throughout the literature confirms that their use as a framework to guide the items for interviewing and questioning is appropriate. In addition to the literature on the themes, we have explored text on appropriate research methods. In response to this search we have included a methodology section as a means to highlight the importance of considering how we conduct research within the context of Aotearoa / New Zealand and in particular in conducting research with young people.



## CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

As outlined in the previous chapter, the evaluation team have provided a simple overview of the key questions that may be of interest to the reader as they work their way through the report. The overall purpose of this chapter is to provide answers to questions along the lines of:

- ▶ What did the evaluation team do?
- ▶ How did the evaluators determine the best way to gather information and analyse it?
- ▶ Who did the evaluators talk to and why? And,
- ▶ Were there things that the evaluators didn't do during this evaluation, but think could have enhanced the evaluation?

### *Consultation and Research Process*

A sound methodology is important to any evaluation research project. This section of the report outlines the consultation and research process for the evaluation, the research methods explored in a literature review, participants in this evaluation of Phat Pak, the research methods used to collect data, and strengths and limitations of the research process.

### Establishing the Focus for the Evaluation

Initial meetings were held with the PPGG liaison person for Phat Pak as well as the PPGG in March 2007. Evaluation literature has identified that if an evaluation is to be utilisable by the client, this process will be more effective if the client group is consulted and participates in decision-making throughout the research project (Patton, 1997). A review of previous evaluations undertaken by Phat Pak helped inform the development of the focus for the current evaluation: the processes and effectiveness

of Phat Pak since the implementation of the Governance Group in 2005. Research methodologies and four key themes were explored in a literature review – Youth participation, Communication strategies, Decision-making processes and Skills development; which formed the framework for evaluation questions.

### Evaluation Team Processes

For the purposes of this study the project was divided into three ‘trimesters’ with teams of two or three students allocated the role of project managers during each trimester. Overall responsibility for the project coordination was held by the lead researcher (Bridgette Masters-Awatere).

Each project management team was responsible for the development, allocation and monitoring of tasks relevant to their management timeframe period (approximately three months) as well as attending any of the meetings with the client. For example, the first team applied for and was granted ethical approval through the Psychology Department Ethics Review Committee at the University of Waikato; the second team were charged with overseeing the data collection phase, and the third team managed the production of the full report.

An electronic online teaching tool (ClassForum) was accessible only to those involved with the project and was used as the primary method of communication between and amongst research team members at times between face to face meetings. ClassForum was used as a project management tool, which was helpful during the data collection phase of the evaluation. During this stage all details for interviews and data collection were gathered and posted onto a calendar on ClassForum so that the whole team could be kept up to date with events coming up and/or requests for assistance.

During the first trimester the team met weekly to explore relevant literature and models that would be of assistance to the development of the evaluation. As the project progressed meeting times were dedicated to reporting on progress, refining and allocating project tasks and then assessing these against the expected

timeframe. From time to time, in particular during the data collection and analysis phase, members of the team were directed to undertake additional small group work in order to ensure the project deadline would be met.

In the interests of making sure the research team was maintaining its focus towards a utilisation-focused evaluation, Patton's (1997) "paradigm of choices" was used as a guide. This paradigm looks at a range of factors that he considers essential for a utilisation-focused evaluation. Areas of focus include the evaluation purpose, measurement, design, researcher stance, inquiry mode, conceptualisation of the research, relationships between researchers and client; approach to studies of change, relationships to prior knowledge of the Project, participant sampling, primary approach to variations, data analysis, types of statements, and the projects contribution to theory. Considering Patton's (1997) aforementioned factors, the goal of this project was to have an evaluation that the client would accept as being utilisable and of relevance to the Phat Pak Project.

A research budget was developed that covered data collection and report production costs. As the research team were students enrolled in a university paper, their work on the project was monitored and measured by way of their grade. Their work was supervised by Bridgette whose supervision, administration and project management time was paid for by the University of Waikato. In this regard an evaluation of this depth and breadth has been produced at much reduced and subsidised cost.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The orientation of the evaluation involved incorporating the values of community psychology (such as valuing diversity, collaborative partnerships and the place of indigenous peoples) were recognised as important beyond merely consideration and were explored as valid positions to hold within the current research project.

The following section of the method considers the draws upon literature that supports the methods used for the evaluation project. Both the advantages and

disadvantages of those methods are discussed here within the context of Aotearoa/ New Zealand.

In this project, the research model that featured predominantly was that of a process evaluation. Patton (1997) describes process evaluation as an evaluation that focuses “on the internal dynamics and actual operations of a program in an attempt to understand its strengths and weaknesses” (p.206). Therefore the emphasis of this evaluation has not been on the product or outcomes of the programme; but rather on the systems and processes that are used in the delivery and achievement of the Phat Pak goals.

### *Archival Research*

This evaluation of the Phat Pak Project drew upon archival research as a key research method. Archival research is the investigation and analysis of existing cultural texts. In comparison to interviewing it is considered less obtrusive and adds a built-in dimension of authenticity to the research process (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004).

There are several advantages to conducting archival research: the data collection and costs of recording the data have already been covered, so it is an economical way of doing research, both in time and resources (Kluwin & Morris, 2006; Smith & Davis, 2004). In addition archival analysis can be a complementary method of gathering information (Waller & Zimbelman, 2003) for any research process that explores change over a given period of time.

To strengthen our argument for the validity of archival research, Smith and Davis (2004) note that by accessing archives researchers can answer questions “by using data that was recorded by other individuals for other purposes” (p.69). In addition Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2004) note that it “enables researchers to examine patterns and themes within the artifacts produced” by any given group or organisation (p.303).

This evaluation focused on youth participation, skill development, communication strategies and decision-making processes since the implementation of the PPGG structure in 2005. Thus accessing certain archives within Phat Pak from the development of the PPGG was considered vital for gathering information on Phat Pak developments and decisions. Such a notion was supported by Davidson (2003) who talks of the strengths of archival research towards documenting trends within an organisation.

### *Naturalistic Observation and Participant Observation*

Forms of observation research, naturalistic or participant, were proposed as methods of data collection during the evaluation. While the original intent was to use this method at specific Phat Pak events, the team were able to engage this method during meetings with the client and at their direct interviews with participants.

Naturalistic observation is observing phenomenon and behaviour in its natural context, which involves “seeking answers to research questions by observing behaviour in the real world” (Smith & Davis, 2004, p.71). Within the context of this evaluation an example would be the researchers sitting in on a Phat Pak meeting and making reflective notes about the interactions and behaviours of the people involved in the meeting. Our intention here was to attend meetings of members with a range of people external to Phat Pak (for example with groups such as funders and providers); as well as attend meetings internal to Phat Pak (such as crews, Mentor with Mentees, and management meetings). The researcher participating (minimally) and observing the general interactions of people would be of benefit in that the researcher as the observer would unobtrusive, and not distinguish themselves from the interactions that are being observed. Wilkinson (2004) referred to the use of a video camera as a means to replace the observer in the field (with the tape subsequently being analysed). Davidson (2003) argues that observing behaviour naturalistically can be a powerful source of information, because the behaviour is being researched directly, instead of just inquiring about that behaviour in an interview research format. Given the research team being new to this method a video camera would have been useful alongside a

researcher observer in order to review the accuracy of the interpretations of the data. Unfortunately for a range of reasons this method was not used.

Participant observation is slightly different from naturalistic observation in that “the investigator assumes the role of a member of the group and makes observations from this vantage point” (Smith & Davis, 2004, p.73).

Davidson (2003) defines participant observation as “a common kind of qualitative research and involves a combination of observation and unstructured interviewing ‘in the field’ of study” (p.101). The advantage of participant observation is that information gathered tends to be much more exploratory because “face to face interaction can deepen insight, especially in program evaluation” (Patton, 1997, p.284). Further advantages are that the researcher is able to get more involved in the processes of the group being observed and therefore learn more about them (Smith & Davis, 2004); and that this process gives the researchers access to attitudes, opinions and emotions, as well as behaviours and interactions between group members (Wilkinson, 2004).

### *Surveys*

According to Issac and Michael (sighted in Goddard & Villanova, 1996) surveys and questionnaires are amongst the most frequently used research methods of the social sciences. Described by Goddard and Villanova (1996) as a way of collecting information from people for descriptive or predictive purposes; a survey can take the form of questionnaires filled out by respondents, or by an interviewer who notes the responses given by research participants (such as in a telephone interview).

Useful for facilitating decisions, evaluating the effectiveness of current policies or programmes, or satisfying a need for information about a research topic, surveys seek information that is attitudinal in nature (Goddard & Villanova, 1996). Within our evaluation of Phat Pak this would refer to documenting the attitudes, opinions, or

beliefs of the various stakeholder groups.

### *Individual Interviews*

Interviews share many features of questionnaires in that there may be a set of items the researcher uses to gather information. With interviews, however, it is possible to ask for explanations and provide information on the reactions of the respondents that cannot be obtained from a questionnaire (Goddard & Villanova, 1996). Semi-structured interviews are not as constrained as a structured interview – they allow for information to be generated that may not have come up otherwise, and the partially quantitative structure allows for relatively easy analysis (Breakwell, 2000).

Seeking explanations and opinions around the themes offered for investigation will provide data to be collated according to qualitative analysis. Because qualitative inquiry depends, at every stage, on the skills, training, insights, and capabilities of the researcher(s); qualitative analysis ultimately depends on the analytical intellect and style of the analyst. In recognising that each qualitative study is unique, the question is not how closely the researcher followed the guidelines, but how fully the data analysis guidelines followed, were reported (Goddard & Villanova; Patton, 1990).

The use of individual interviews was determined as appropriate for members of the governance group (including the coordinator) and the staff from Ministry of Health who manage the contract. Our primary reason for selecting these participants as individual interviews was to allow them the ability to speak freely about concerns they may have and not have felt comfortable to share in a more open forum. Interviews conducted in person – face to face or *kanohi ki te kanohi* – which encouraged a more personal exchange than would have happened with a telephone or email interview. When conducted with an audio recording device and a second interviewer in support this gave the lead interviewer the opportunity engage in conversational interview as opposed to a process that resembled a survey.

## *Focus Group Interviews*

Historically, focus groups developed in the business world of marketing as a process to determine the needs and responses of consumers to products and services. Social science research has incorporated this style of interviewing and as a result has become more popular since the 1990s (Millward, 2000).

Participants in a focus group are selected from a population based on a shared homogeneity, in this instance, involvement in Phat Pak. It is assumed by the researcher that the participants who are brought together hold a perspective, beliefs, opinions, attitudes or feelings about the topic of investigation and it is the facilitators role to manage the process (Millward, 2000; Westbrook, 2001). It is expected that the focus and environment, facilitated by the moderator, allows the group to explore a topic in depth (Kress & Shoffner, 2007; Millward, 2000; Waldegrave, 1999). For youth group interviews these have been known to elicit more open responses as they can as a group of their own colleagues engage with a researcher (Masters-Awatere, Kirk & Moleni, 2005).

The use of focus groups for this evaluation is appropriate as a method to gather data on the perspectives and attitudes of participants in the areas of youth participation, communication strategies, decision making processes and skill development within Phat Pak. The focus group is a method which encourages participation as group members remind each other about shared experiences.

Focus groups may continue to be conducted until the conversation reaches a point where no new information emerges - saturation (Walsh, White & Young, 2007). However for the purposes of this evaluation the number of focus groups will be limited by availability due to the actual numbers of members within Phat Pak as well as the geographical spread of the groups. Similarly while the literature varies on the ideal size of a group, from three to 12 (Kress & Shoffner, 2007; Millward, 2000; Westbrook, 2001), this will be determined by availability.



## *Ethical Considerations*

As noted in the evaluation proposal, the evaluation team have worked in a manner that is consistent with the Code of Ethics for Psychologists<sup>2</sup> working in New Zealand. In addition to the factors described in the proposal is the relevance of confidentiality and anonymity. The issue of anonymity and confidentiality is often an issue for respondents when someone is asked to be involved in any research – this project is no different. From the outset respondents were informed that they would not be named alongside comments they made. For the coordinator this was problematic, in that there was only one person in this role. After careful consideration, and discussion with the coordinator, the research team determined they would incorporate the coordinators responses with those of the governance group as the work of the coordinator (in terms of reporting) more closely aligns to them as opposed to other stakeholder groups within the evaluation.

Confidentiality is a level of protection given to research participants, whether they are responding to a questionnaire or participating in an interview. As a means of maintaining confidentiality, individual responses are identifiable only to the researcher(s) and involves securing all responses and raw data in a safe manner and reporting aggregate or group data that provides information to the reader without directly linking material back to the individual respondent.

While responses have not been linked to named individuals the ability of the research to maintain anonymity within Phat Pak is difficult. In consideration that Phat Pak is a small organisation with key people who regularly interact, it is likely that people within the group may be able to make an ‘educated guess’ as to who made various comments.

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<sup>2</sup> An example being our decision to not focus on gathering information from youth (mentees and rangatahi of Phat Pak) who were under 16 years of age.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

Individual and focus group interviews, questionnaires and archival/document analysis were used to collect data for the purposes of this evaluation. In this next section we provide you with a description of the process the evaluation team followed and the rationalisation for that process for the purposes of informing potential future evaluation plans.

### *Research Participants*

Despite our intention to use participant and naturalistic observation (as explored in the review of literature on research methodologies) these were not used for reasons such as no events were held during our evaluation and a constraint to complete the evaluation within such a short timeframe.

Key stakeholders of the Phat Pak programme were identified as important people to involve as research participants. These were:

- PPGG (client) including the Coordinator
- Mentors
- Mentees/Crews
- Rangatahi (youth) recipients of Phat Pak message, and
- Funders (Ministry of Health)

A secondary stakeholder was also identified; the designers of the Phat Pak resource. In recognition of the need to keep the evaluation focused and within a manageable timeframe this stakeholder was eliminated from the participant list.

After discussions within the governance group, and between the governance group and research team, participants were recruited through the PPGG liaison person who made initial contact to advise them that a member of the research team would be in contact. It was at this point that the research team were given a list of participants and their contact details, so that direct contact could be made. A summary of the

participants has been provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Data collection methods used and the number of participants involved

<b>Participant group<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>No of participants</b>	<b>Method of data collection</b>
Governance Group	6	Face-to-face interview
Mentors	4	Face-to-face interview
Mentees	13	Focus group
Rangatahi (youth)	12	Questionnaire
Funders (Ministry of Health)	2	Face-to-face interview

#### Pre-interview Preparation

Information sheets, protocols, and question schedules were developed for each form of data collection. Information sheets (Appendix 1) were forwarded to participants prior to focus groups or face-to-face interviews and Mentors were asked to forward the information sheets to Mentees and Rangatahi.

A protocols plan (Appendix 2) included a checklist of ethical considerations, and tasks to be completed such as ensuring the consent form had been signed and the participant was clear about interview recording and data storage, confidentiality and anonymity issues.

Questionnaires and interview schedules were developed within the framework of the four themes identified for this evaluation, and these differed in their styles according to the different roles of the groups of participants. For face-to-face interviews and

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<sup>3</sup> Of the four Phat Pak crew sites given to the evaluation team to contact one Mentor and Mentee crew did not participate due to initial communication issues and unavailability within the timeframe for data collection.

focus groups, a set of objectives was established for each participant group to guide the structure of the questions within those themes (Appendix 3).

Demographic information sheets (Appendix 4) were developed and filled in by Governance Group members, Funders, Mentors and Mentees prior to data collection. These included questions such as age, gender, why they joined Phat Pak and their time on involvement in Phat Pak.

### Post-interview Records

Post-interview sheets (Appendix 5) were completed by each interviewer (as stated earlier the interviews were conducted in pairs) upon completion of individual and focus group interviews as a means of capturing thoughts of the interview process and any comments that seemed most salient to the interviewers immediately after the interview.

### Face-to-face Interviews

Individual, face-to-face interviews were undertaken with each Mentor prior to the focus group interviews with Mentees. The purpose for the timing was to help develop a rapport with the Mentor before research team members were introduced to the Mentees. The interviews and focus groups took place at a venue nominated by the mentor (that was within their local area).

Individual, face-to-face interviews with Governance Group members (including the Coordinator) and Funders (Ministry of Health) were undertaken at a location most convenient for the participant. Interviews took approximately 30 minutes to an hour and were recorded onto MP3 or audio-tape devices. Two interviewers were present, the first who had established contact with the participant and arranged the interview would conduct it, and the second interviewer was responsible for taking additional

notes to support the main interviewer, as well as follow up on any items of interest to arise during the interview that the lead interviewer may have missed during the conversation.

### Focus Groups

Mentors were given the option as to whether they would participate in the Mentee focus groups. All of the focus groups were conducted directly after the face-to-face interviews with mentors.

Two or three researchers were present, and began the focus group by introducing themselves and the research process. Kai was provided either before or during the focus group and a koha by way of a Warehouse voucher were offered to participants after the interviews. Focus groups took between 30 minutes and 1.5 hours and were recorded onto MP3 or audio-tape devices. As with the individual interviews, the primary interviewer asked the key questions and a second or third interviewer supported the focus group process ensuring that the focus group was exploring ideas relevant to the research and noting any other relevant information.

### Rangatahi Questionnaires

These were used to gain data from Rangatahi (youth) recipients, that is, those who are in contact with Phat Pak crews and receive their health promotion information and message. The questionnaires included items that explored what youth recipients thought about the Phat Pak Project, as well as standard demographics such as age and gender (Appendix 6). These were distributed via local Mentors and Mentees in the Waikato. Postage paid, addressed envelopes were distributed to Mentors to return the questionnaires to the research team. It had been hoped that a Phat Pak event would allow us to distribute these directly however no events were scheduled within the data collection period.

## Archival Data

PPGG meeting minutes and Ministry of Health six-monthly performance measure reports from 2005 onwards (including the DVD) were requested and forwarded to the research team for analysis. Other archives and documents from the beginning of 2005 were also analysed, as this was the focus period for the evaluation; including Memorandums of Understanding, and other administrative documentation such as application forms for funding of crew events.

## *Data Analysis*

Face to face interview and focus group recordings were transcribed by the respective interviewers to be analysed qualitatively. These transcripts were then coded according to the four themes of this evaluation: youth participation, communication strategies, decision-making processes and skills development. In pairs, research team members were assigned a theme to code into sub-themes. When the initial analysis was done, each pair swapped with another to peer review the analysis and check for bias.

Rangatahi Questionnaires were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively to gain a youth recipient's perspective on the effectiveness of Phat Pak with regards to the four themes mentioned above, but particularly youth participation.

Demographics/General Information sheets were analysed quantitatively to gain an overall picture of the demographics of people who are involved in the Phat Pak Project.

Archival documents were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively according to a framework developed by the research team (Appendix 7) depending on the document, to gain supporting information for the four themes. This would help to support data

from face to face interviews, focus groups, and Rangatahi (youth) recipient questionnaires.

### Data Storage

All data, including original recordings and transcripts were held by the principal investigator (Bridgette Masters-Awatere) at the University of Waikato. These were collected by the main interviewer and handed to her together with post interview notes, consent forms and receipts for reimbursement of expenses.

### *Evaluation Limitations and Strengths*

A number of limitations and areas to work on as well as a number of strengths were identified in this evaluation of the Phat Pak Project, to note for future evaluations.

The main limitation of the evaluation was the time constraint of only five months to conduct the interviews and report the findings. More time would have allowed the research team to: pilot test the interview schedules and Rangatahi questionnaires; attend crew events in order for the research team to distribute the questionnaires to a wider Rangatahi group; interview the mentor and crew in Taumarunui; and to interview potential participants beyond the contact list provided by the client, such as other Phat Pak service providers or people who had previous contact with Phat Pak.

From analysis of notes on protocols, thorough preparation by the interviewer was reinforced as contributing to a better interview process. Some fine-tuning of instructions may have made the process easier with regards to reordering specific tasks, adding extras (such as the objectives), and simplifying other tasks. Post interview notes completed by the researchers indicated that better preparation and checking of the questions might have contributed to a smoother process as well as generating richer data collection. This was particularly evident in interviews and focus

groups with young people. As identified above in any future research it may be useful to test the questions with a group of young people prior to using with the research participants. On the whole, however, researchers were positive about the process they used and the information that the interview questions generated.

In recognising the strengths of this evaluation; the research team did achieve a great deal within a limited time frame. In order to accommodate for all participants – 37 in total – and their requirements, many different methodologies were explored, and all team processes and findings, such as the information obtained from participants and archival data and documents, were scrutinised using a peer-support system. With a diverse research team from different disciplines, we were able to draw on the different strengths of people within the team. Members of the research team supported one another well, and always maintained a professional relationship with the client. The research team also ensured that the whole evaluation, especially the data-gathering phase, was ethically and culturally safe for both researchers and participants.



## CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

The overall purpose of this chapter is to provide an overall summary of the findings from the range of data sources that the team engaged for the evaluation. Within this chapter the answer to questions will be provided for the reader.

- ▶ What did people involved with Phat Pak processes have to say?
- ▶ Were the comments generally positive or negative?
- ▶ Were there similar things were being said by different groups of people?  
And,
- ▶ Were the findings consistent across the different sources of information?

### *Chapter Structure*

This results chapter will incorporate all of the findings from this evaluation of the Phat Pak Project; and incorporates findings from: archival analysis, from rangatahi questionnaires, and participant interviews. Information from the general information sheets given to all participants such as: Governance Group, Mentors, Mentees and Ministry of Health Funders), as well as information gathered from the questionnaires distributed to rangatahi. The findings from the participant interviews have been arranged into two sections of relevance – for the Governance Group and the project in general.

Findings from archives and other relevant documentation will also be included in this section, to reinforce findings from data collected during face to-face and focus group interviews. Archives and documents include: Memorandums of Understanding, Governance Group meeting minutes from 2005 onwards, Ministry of Health six-monthly performance measure reports from 2005 onwards, and administrative documents that assist in the day-to-day running of the Phat Pak Project.

Also to be included are key findings from the analysis of the four themes from face to face and focus group interviews: Youth Participation, Communication Strategies, Decision-making Processes, and Skills Development. These are available to be viewed in the separate appendices document (see Appendix 8); where results specific to each of the four themes are recorded separately. This chapter has synthesised the information from the four themes accordingly to avoid repetition of findings, therefore if the reader wishes to refer to specific details noted within this results chapter, they will be able to explore the relevant theme within the Appendices Document. Structure diagrams of the Phat Pak Project drawn by each Governance Group member will also be able to be referred to in the appendices (see Appendix 9).

## **GENERAL INFORMATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS**

Key stakeholder groups who participated in the evaluation project were identified as: PPGG including the Coordinator and service providers; Mentors; Mentees; rangatahi recipients; and Ministry of Health Funders.

Participants were recruited through the governance group. Following receipt of the contact details for each participant Debbie Petersen made initial contact to advise people that they would be contacted by the research team. Of the four Phat Pak crews contacted one Mentor and their crew of Mentees did not participate due to communication and availability challenges. Data from two Mentees was not included due to age restrictions.

There were 37 participants involved in the evaluation of Phat Pak ranging in age from 16 to 60years. All the Mentees (13) and rangatahi (12) identified themselves as being between the ages of 16 to 20 years. Mentors' ages ranged from 21 to 50 years and Governance Group members' (includes the coordinator for the purposes of participant description) ages ranged from 21 to 60 years. Participants described their ethnicity as one or a combination of several of the following groups: Pakeha/ New Zealand European (4); New Zealand or Cook Island Māori (23), with a variety of Iwi

affiliations – Ngati Raukawa, Tainui, Ngati Maniapoto; Pacific Island (14) specifically, Tongan, Samoan, Cook Island, Aitutaki, Mangaia, Rarotonga, Manihiki. Half of the Mentors and Mentees described themselves as Māori and the other half as Pacific Island. Governance Group members described their ethnicity as European (3), Māori European (1), Māori Pacific Island (1) and Cook Island (1). The participants from the Ministry of Health Funders described themselves as Māori or Pacific Island.

The length of time that participants<sup>4</sup> had been involved in Phat Pak ranged from those who have been involved from its inception (eight years) to some who were very new to Phat Pak (two weeks). Most of the Mentees have been involved for less than 10 months while two have been involved for between 4 and 5 years. Mentors have been involved for between 1 to 5 years, while Governance Group members have been a part of Phat Pak for between 4 and 8 years, the majority between 6 and 8 years.

The majority of participants started their involvement in the role they are currently holding. Six of the 22 who responded to this question (two did not respond) had “moved up” from a previous role, for example from Mentee to Mentor, Mentor to Governance or Coordinator.

Governance Group members, Mentors and Mentees were asked about their reason for joining Phat Pak and were given a list to select from (multiple selections were possible) as well as an ‘other’ category. The majority of participants indicated that they joined Phat Pak because they “*like its philosophy and aim*” with next most common reason being that they “*wanted to help the community*” followed by “*because my friends were members / others asked me along*”. Figure 1 shows the number in each participant group according to their selected reason/s. The most common reason for Mentees joining was because a friend or relative was already a member and/or had asked them along. Additional or “other” reasons for joining included: being approached by current members of Phat Pak who hold key roles; part of their contractual obligation or job description and/or it was described from a personal perspective as a passion, opportunity, to help others and/or to learn.

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<sup>4</sup> Participant descriptors does not include the 12 rangatahi who completed questionnaires.

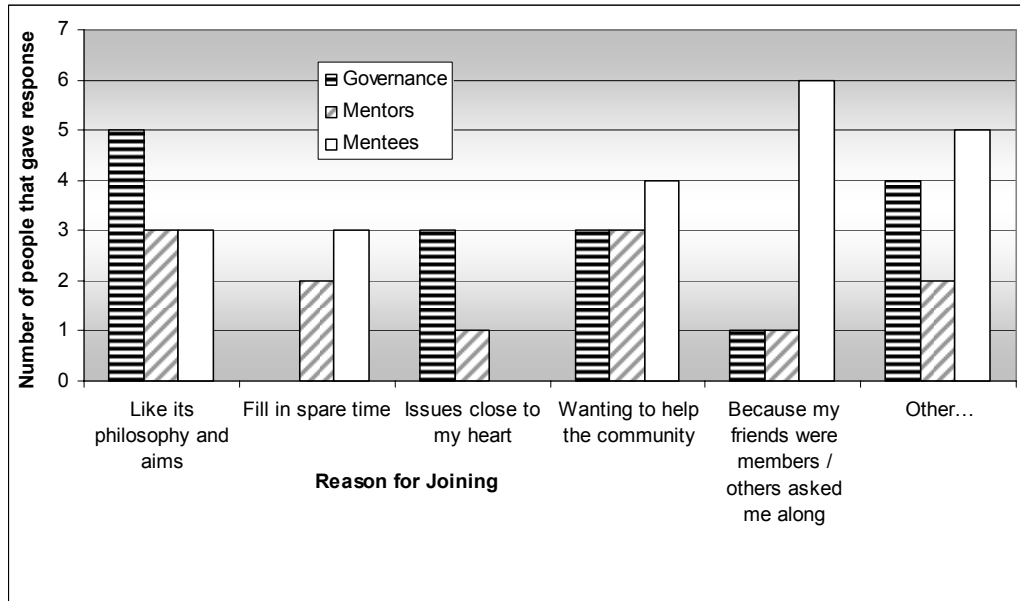


Figure 1: Reasons for joining Phat Pak as indicated by participant groups

## ARCHIVAL RESULTS

The following paragraphs include findings from the analysis of various archival documents supplied to the research team. These include:

- Administrative Documents
- Memorandums of Understanding
- Governance Group Meeting Minutes from 2005
- Ministry of Health Six-monthly Performance Measure Reports from 2005

### *Administrative Documents*

A variety of administrative documents were made available to the research team by Phat Pak. Contained within one of the files we received was a contents page, which indicated that files we received comprised specific sections of a Phat Pak 'Induction Manual'. Not every section was available, but the existence of documents such as

templates for budgets, meeting minutes and agenda, MoH reporting requirements, and crew work plans indicates a the existence of a day-to-day management structure.

There was a crew member position description and an individual crew member agreement form; and these outline the expectations of Mentees as members of Phat Pak crews. The induction manual contents page suggested that there are similar forms for mentors, but these were not made available to the research team.

There are also a number of documents that have been developed specifically for Phat Pak events that are run by crews throughout the Waikato: Project event planning sheets and application forms for event funding, resource (Phat Pak Packs) distribution application forms and resource distribution lists, sign in/out sheets for event resources (i.e. banners, marquees), reimbursement requisition forms, parental consent forms and incident report templates. This is positive for the management and scheduling of Phat Pak events.

## **MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING**

The Memorandum of Understanding is an agreement between health service providers and the PPGG. Our understanding of it's intended purpose suggests there is an intention to promote the understanding of obligations of the service providers to the Phat Pak Project and to enhance participation by providers at PPGG meetings.

The Memorandum of Understanding was developed and implemented by the Phat Pak Coordinator and a PPGG member in early April 2007. Five providers had signed Memoranda of Understanding by 12 June 2007. The Memorandum of Understanding clearly states the two parties obligations:

### Phat Pak Governance Group will:

1. Provide a nominated project coordinator to
  - 1.1 Support mentors and crews
  - 1.2 Coordinate training
  - 1.3 Support event organisation
  - 1.4 Provide resources

- 1.5 Facilitate collective meetings
- 1.6 Maintain the Phat Pak website
2. Safe delivery of programmes through policies
3. Maintain regular contact with key stakeholders

Providers agree to:

1. Maintain and develop a Phat Pak crew
2. Provide mentors to meet objectives of work plan
3. Provide a representative on the Phat Pak Project Governance Group
4. Report and evaluate involvement with the Phat Pak quarterly
5. Develop a working relationship with local DHB health provider

Positive aspects

- a) The Memorandum of Understanding was intended as a communication strategy to provide clarity around roles and obligations to the Phat Pak project by Governance Group members and service providers of Phat Pak
- b) This has been a new initiative and was well implemented with all providers signing the agreement
- c) Some service providers have interpreted the Memorandum of Understandings to be directed at meeting the reporting obligations primarily

## **GOVERNANCE GROUP MEETING MINUTES**

Our analysis of the minutes from PPGG meetings shows that various governance models have been investigated by the team, including mention of “Carver” and “community management” model (see Minutes Wednesday 7 September 2005). We assume from these minutes that PPGG are aware of at least some aspects of Carver’s policy governance model and the importance of key distinctions between the board’s role and the coordinator’s role. The governance group also appear aware of the issues around governance encroaching on the coordinator’s role by being involved in certain decisions but are also concerned about the practical realities of being a small organisation and thus needing several people each to perform several different functions. The minutes reflect the balance they are striving to keep between currently having limited hands available to perform operational functions while still working towards an ideal of being less involved in operations in the future.

In a meeting held in September 2005 the minutes note a need to support the coordinator and temper this by not having too much of a hands-on role while the person settles into the position;

*PPGG member1 – between Carver and community mgmt... Co-ord will need a lot of support initially....Not like to see governance having a too hands off role, more responsibility initially?*

*PPGG member 2 – community mgmt is what the committee has been to date. Agree with [PPGG member1]. At start need to be a lot more available as time goes on more distant.*

*PPGG member3 – ...The training was awesome really clear about the roles. (Wednesday 7 September 2005)*

The development of guiding policies and procedures was further evidence that the governance group is aware of, and working towards, a policy-driven ideal. They are collecting examples of health and safety related policies from other community organisations as possible examples to guide the formulation of their own policies.

*Send in examples of your own health and safety type policies to [the Coordinator]. We will collate and check for gaps then decide way forward from there. Will be discussed as priority on agenda at next meeting. (Minutes, Wednesday 2 November 2005)*

No statements of policy were provided to the evaluation team for analysis, so we are unable to comment on the status of the projects policy development effort thus far. We acknowledge, however, that the evaluation team did not explicitly ask for statements of policy when requesting archival material for analysis, so it is probable that several policies have been already been developed.

A “planning day” for governance on 6 December 2006 was referred to in many of the meetings minutes, where the board was going to address many important issues around clarifying vision, policy formation, clarity on the role of governance, conflicts of interest, long-term planning, etc. However, the notes from the planning day were not included in the archival material provided to the evaluation team. These notes, along with any statements of policy, would be valuable documents to be analysed in future evaluations.

A “Roles and Responsibilities” document produced in October 2005 clearly lists the functions of the governance group. One of the functions of the board is *Receiving*,

*considering and approving budgets and capital expenditure items.* This function does not mention a specific amount and therefore by default makes the board responsible for approving expenditures of any amount. Thus the PPGG has been involved in approving basic operating expenditures like office equipment, telephone bills, reimbursements and transport (see examples in Minutes from 26 April 2007 and 22 May 2007).

Our understanding is that the Governance Group has advised the Ministry of Health that a specified expenditure amount has been pre-approved for the coordinator to make purchases of relevance to Phat Pak. However, the approval of this pre-allocated budget was not in any of the minutes provided to the evaluation team, so we are not sure when the pre-allocated budget limit was approved by the board and if the above-mentioned examples of minutes took place before or after the limit was agreed upon.

The “Roles and Responsibilities” of the PPGG were revisited in the minutes for January 2007, where the board discussed their role and the expectations of the coordinator’s role. However, these points remain in the form of a brainstorming discussion and a separate updated “Roles and Responsibilities” document was not among the archival information provided to the evaluation team.

The establishment of a youth advisory group was moved and seconded by the governance group in March 2006, but then later decided against such a move (in December 2006), with the main reason being that it would add another organisational layer. Other options were suggested that might serve the same function while utilising already existing structures.

*It was moved that a Youth Advisory Group be established with [the coordinator] being the Key Facilitator with a review in 4 months. [Motion moved and seconded]. (Minutes, 30 March 2006)*

*Youth Advisory Group – where is this at?? Governance does not think it needs to add another layer and have made the following Suggestions:*

*Youth group Facilitated by the co-ordinator held same day as the collective meeting*

*Committee to double act as Advisory group, mentors to bring one youth to a meeting, alternate meeting times to suit the youth*



*To hold quarterly meetings, so all levels of PHAT PAK can meet and get to know one another (Minutes, 5 December 2006)*

It is interesting to note that the subsequent decision not to establish a youth advisory group was made nine months later in December 2006, even though the initial approval was based on a review four months later in July 2006. The reason for the delay was not evident in the meeting minutes, but several minutes mention the difficulties experienced by the governance group in making decisions when a quorum is not present.

## **MOH SIX-MONTHLY REPORTS**

The information in the accountability reports submitted to the Ministry of Health reinforces the concern held by the Governance Group and the Coordinator regarding the participation levels of youth in Phat Pak. Since the beginning of 2005 the number of active Phat Pak crews has diminished from eight to three. While there were up to four reported in the last period as inactive (but considering options for reactivating) there remains some concern about the level of activity and representation at the regional collective by mentors and the Governance Group by hosting organisations' youth reps.

The Governance Group took longer than expected to become established with their first meeting taking place in July 2006. Although initially there was a commitment by most of the providers in representation on the Governance Group, this initial level has not been maintained and continues to be supported by a core of three or four members. The intention was to meet monthly until they became established and then move to quarterly meetings.

According to the figures in these reports participation in regional training also appears to have declined with 70 young people reported to have attended weekend training in 2005, 36 in 2006 and 10 in 2007.

New initiatives such as the redesign of the Phat Pak resource, a newsletter and website were progressed through 2006 and by the end of the year Phat Pak had moved into their own premises in central Hamilton.

From July 2006 the format of the accountability reports changed to reflect four key outputs:

1. Support youth development by implementing strengths based approaches
2. Developing skilled people to work with young people
3. Create opportunities for young people to actively participate and engage in community
4. Service development through strengthening the capacity of the sector in public health.

The examples given as demonstration of outputs achievement includes: ongoing training wananga; coordinator networking with other agencies and groups; participation in community events by Phat Pak crews; and, the development of Memorandums of Understanding between the PPGG and service providers.

## **RANGATAHI QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS**

Questionnaires were handed out to three Mentors at the end of their interviews and they were then asked to pass these on to local rangatahi in their community. Twelve questionnaires were returned in total, six each from two crew sites in the Waikato. A third crew was unable to distribute their questionnaires and we acknowledge that time constraints may have been a possible reason for this. Regardless the results are summarised and compared between the two Crew sites and general conclusions are drawn overall from both groups.

Of the six questionnaires that were returned from Crew site #1 , it is important to note that one of the questionnaires was incomplete; only three questions were answered, and no comments or statistical information were written. The remaining questionnaires however, painted a very positive picture of Phat Pak, its message, Mentors and strategies.

Only one of the six participants commented that they had participated as a crew member, and she would also consider joining the crew in order to help out others. Two, who had not previously participated as crew members, were tempted to get more involved as “*they do some choice things*”. “*Other time commitments*” was offered as a reason for not wanting to become a crew member. When asked what would encourage more youth to join, “*free stuff*”, “*if when we join up we get something free like hats, t-shirts, drink bottles, hoodies etc...*”, “*payment and free item / more free items*” were the dominating responses. What would discourage them? Responses ranged from “*if it was stink*” and “*if the host was boring and yelled all the time*” to “*teasing*” at meetings.

In the question on how they think that Phat Pak are getting their message across, answers were varied, and no clear conclusion could be drawn. In regards to what the message of Phat Pak is, responses were unified, all focused around safe sex and keeping safe.

The process of finding out about upcoming events did not offer much consensus, with responses ranging from “*they tell us and sum mates*” and “*from members*”, to “*they have pamphlets out around the community*”, “*posters*” and “*flyers, posters, texts...*”. This variety in response clearly shows that a wide variety of methods are used to reach the local rangatahi.

In describing Phat Pak Members, rangatahi described them all in a very positive manner. The most common response was “*helpful*”, which was ticked by five out of six participants.

The last question of the questionnaire allowed for open comments from Rangatahi, something which evoked different responses. “*They do CHOICE*” was one; another was “*advertise more, make yourselves more well known*” and “*their work at the MC Battles were good*”, and “*keep it up*”.

Overall, the questionnaire responses were very positive and paint a very good picture of the effort made and the status held of Phat Pak in the community.

## Crew Site #2

As in the questionnaires from Crew site #1, one participant's responses handed back from Crew site #2 need to be acknowledged. This particular participant's responses focused on the assumption that Phat Pak is a support network to help youth lose weight and get fit and healthy. As a result her answers to our questions are in response to her perception of Phat Pak rather than from a position of understanding what Phat Pak actually does. This suggests that Phat Pak there is room for increasing awareness about the aims amongst the community.

Rangatahi questionnaires from Crew site #2 showed that five out of the six participants have participated as Phat Pak crew members, and five out of six would consider becoming part of the crew. Reasons for wanting to join were "*because it helps you understand safe sex*" and "*because they do a lot of fun things and the message they give out to the younger people is awesome*". Their recommendations for encouraging more youth to join the programme, were "*more things to do*", "*the events and going out of town*" and "*I think more promotion of what we do than what we are about*".

There were a broad range of responses to the question on how successful rangatahi think the Phat Pak are in getting their message out. Three participants responded with "Don't know / No response", while one commented that it was "excellent" and another commented that it was "above average".

How participants found out about upcoming events was very varied, with "*crew*", "*by the mentors*", "*meetings*" and "*friends*", so now a clear picture is painted on a common way of finding out about upcoming Phat Pak events.

Mentors were described as "cool" by four out of six respondents, and three commented that they were the right people for the job. All responses were positive, and nothing negative was pointed out. The final comment by a participant summed the overall picture of Phat Pak by youth well... "*PHAT PAK ROCK*"

## Comparison

Overall, responses indicate that more rangatahi had participated as crew members in Phat Pak in Crew site #2 rather than in Crew site #1 (five versus one). Both groups had different ideas on how to encourage more rangatahi to become Phat Pak crew/Mentees. Crew site #1 rangatahi were focused on receiving more free stuff and incentives for their joining, whereas the Crew site #2 rangatahi were focused on getting out, and going to events and trainings. In response to the question on how Phat Pak is getting their message across, answers were inconclusive within and between the two groups. Responses ranged from “no response” to “excellent”. Surprisingly, the messages that they are trying to get out were very much on the same level. Crew site #1 was mainly focused on “safe sex” and “keeping safe”, whereas Crew site #2 was focused on “keeping safe”, accepting that “it’s ok to ask for help” and “making the right choices”.

Finding out about events was another question that did not offer a clear picture of how rangatahi are informed. Both Crew sites responses to these questions were varied. On the other hand, both locations described their Mentors as very positive, helpful, cool and that they are the right people for the job.

Overall, rangatahi in both areas seem very happy with the message and the efforts put in by Phat Pak. As such Phat Pak seems to be a positive aspect in their lives, and something that they would consider joining - for different reasons.

## **STRUCTURE DIAGRAM ANALYSIS**

During the interview process, Governance members (not including the Coordinator) were asked to draw a picture of what they perceive the Phat Pak structure to be (see Appendix 9). A general Phat Pak structure diagram (February 2006 – see Appendix 10) has been provided to the research team, hence, comparisons and analysis of structure diagrams drawn by the Governance members will be made with reference to

the general Phat Pak structure.

On the left hand side of the general Phat Pak structure is the HYDT and the Phat Pak Coordinator. HYDT is linked directly to PPGG, and the primary funder, Ministry of Health (MoH) at the bottom of the structure. The Phat Pak Coordinator is linked directly to rangatahi at the top of the structure, and this links down to Crew Mentees/Informers, Crew Mentors, Phat Pak Collective, and PPGG. Rangatahi are linked with Phat Pak events, activities, schools, Alternative Learning Centres (ALCs) etc on the right hand side of the structure. Also linking these two with Crew Mentees are families, the community and general public. The primary funder, MoH, is linked to respective organisations (service providers) on the right side of the structure, which links to the Phat Pak Crew Mentors. In the background are other supporting organisations, which link Crew Mentees, Crew Mentors, Phat Pak Collective and PPGG to the respective organisations.

The above description of the Phat Pak structure places Rangatahi (youth) recipients of the Phat Pak message at the top, implying that they are the focus of Phat Pak. Only one diagram drawn by a Governance member indicated a similar structure, with Phat Pak crews being at the top of the diagram, linking down through to the Mentors, the Coordinator, and PPGG. Circles were drawn around the Mentors and the Coordinator, indicating a close working relationship. Another Governance member placed the primary funder, the MoH at the top of their diagram, linking down to the Governance and Coordinator that then linked across to the Mentors with the Regional Collective and then down to the Crews and the community. Three diagrams drawn placed the Governance Group at the top of the diagrams, flowing down to the Coordinator, the Collective and the Crews (Mentors and Mentees).

One Governance member indicated that this is what they perceived the Phat Pak structure to be at the moment, but also drew a diagram indicating what they believed the ideal should look like – a circular model placing the Phat Pak crews in the middle, surrounded and supported by the Coordinator and the Governance Group on the outside of the circle. Another Governance member drew a diagram that was more detailed than the others, showing the MoH linking down to HYDT. This linked into Governance, that was indicated as a strategic body comprised of all service

provider representatives. The Coordinator was situated below Governance with a one-way arrow indicating information flow from the Coordinator into Governance. In addition the Coordinator linked with a two-way arrow down to the Collective, indicated as a 'day-to-day' or management body, comprising of Mentors and MoH, public health providers; and the Mentors linked down to Mentees with a two-way arrow.

Governance group members drew diagrams that were all quite different, and this indicates a need for clarity of the Phat Pak structure. Clarity about the model that PPGG follows would result in a more unified picture of the role of this group in relation to the structure of Phat Pak. The diagrams drawn by governance placed the coordinator in between the board and the Regional Collective, which is a very different relationship than what is shown in the General Phat Pak Structure document provided by Phat Pak (Appendix 10). This perhaps suggests a weak link between the Governance and Collective groups, which could be strengthened by the use of the Collective in an advisory capacity alongside of, or in place of, a youth advisory group.

It would have been interesting to see how other participants in this evaluation – particularly the Coordinator and Mentors, viewed the structure of Phat Pak.

## **PARTICIPANT INTERVIEWS**

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the following section of the findings has been divided into two areas; results specifically relevant to the governance group, and results relevant to the Phat Pak programme generally.

The participants were the 25 people noted as either face to face or focus group interview in the method chapter; who contributed to the data gathered for the purpose of this evaluation. These participants were people who are directly involved with Phat Pak in some shape or form.

## **GOVERNANCE GROUP**

Overall participants were in general agreement that the governance group has worked well in some areas since its inception in 2005. The desire of the governance group to take a more active leadership role over and above the process that is currently in place was being called for. Participants referred to a desire for the governance group to determine a model of governance to work from. In recognition of the importance of regular maintenance and reflection participants were in agreement that the governance group has the potential to work even better for Phat Pak. The impact of the lack of clarity and understanding with regards to the model of governance were noted across the different interest groups within Phat Pak. Within the governance group an example of where clarity was wanted was where members discussed their desire to gain clarity on the roles of governance group members, including the coordinator, and the service providers. For them gaining clarity was seen as important for matters such as communication processes, financial business and transactions, as well as decision making processes. With regards to financial business, the need for a clear policy and procedure to respond to immediate requests such as those on short notice (usually in response to events) where current policy has hindered the role of the coordinator because a single purchase must not exceed the pre-approved amount. While there is indication of a policy (as noted in the archival data results), the implementation has not been consistent with some financial decisions clearly showing purchases that are less than the pre-approved limit. This process indicates a blurring of the boundary between governance and management, which from the comments raised by participants indicates that people within the governance group are also grappling with this notion.

Within the notion of gaining clarity, interview participants talked about the importance of clarity in terms of participation and input from the different member groups within Phat Pak. People talked about the importance of ensuring high participation rates with regards to decision making processes. For some the low levels of input from service providers into decision making processes was of concern. A desire to improve communication amongst governance members was seen as



important as the governance group moves forward to develop and implement policy (on financial business, as well as on risk and event management).

### *Youth Participation*

There was a recognition by participants of a need for youth participation in governance. Such a position is based on the notion that youth should be involved in decisions that affect them, which participants felt was of paramount importance for an organisation such as Phat Pak. Youth participation has been supported and encouraged in Phat Pak, but has seen a lull, both in participation at Governance and in the number of active crew sites. While youth participation may not be currently happening at governance level it is certainly happening at the crew level. Documents outline the number of active sites has decreased in this past two years.

The current lack of participation by youth at governance was discussed amongst participants as being a result of a lack of training to prepare them adequately for this role. People also felt that it was important that those already within Phat Pak should be resourced and trained to be able to work with youth, so that when youth become involved the other members will be skilled in ways to further encourage participation and ensure inclusion in the processes of governance.

Identified barriers to youth participation at governance level were noted across the range of interview participants. Some examples of barriers included:

- minute-taking, language of moving and seconding of motions, and dynamics between young people and adults on governance
- the nature of these meetings have been conducted in ways that have no meaning to youth; were not understood; considered as ‘boring’, and potentially intimidating for youth.

Participants recognised the range of demands on young people (such as sport and cultural groups), which meant that they were not readily available to be representatives on PPGG. Additional difficulties such as transport (geographical

isolation), meeting times conflicting with school attendance and various other commitments that youth have were recognised.

The notion of a youth advisory group has been discussed within the governance group. Such a group was suggested as being Hamilton based or have youth representatives from the Waikato region; was considered an ideal opportunity for youth to gradually develop skills such as communication and decision-making skills. Involvement would increase youth input into decision-making at governance without necessarily making youth attend governance meetings. Participants seemed to be caught up with the notion that an advisory group could also provide similar input for organisations seeking youth input.

### ***Communication Strategies & Decision-making Processes***

Three main areas of importance were commonly raised amongst participants with regards to communication strategies and the importance of these on an effective decision-making process. The three strategies were: technology, communication processes and the coordinator.

#### Technology

Governance Group members use a wide range of technology strategies to communicate amongst each other within Phat Pak. Such examples include email, landline and mobile phone calls; and more recently the introduction of teleconferencing has been used to share information as well as support decision-making outside of the face to face governance meeting process.

There was a shared hope throughout Phat Pak that teleconferencing will be effective towards enabling a youth voice to be represented in decision-making at governance, that there will always be a quorum in attendance, and that Phat Pak members from the

wider Waikato region will be able to participate. Teleconferencing was implemented for 1 meeting prior to the production of this evaluation report. While the governance group were encouraged to see a slight increase in participants, they still did not get the numbers they expected at their first teleconference meeting. Members of the governance group indicated that they would be exploring the issues further.

The issue of backlogging decisions (due to lack of a quorum) was ultimately resolved by sending out an email to all governance members notifying them of the things that needed signing off. Email technology has occasionally been used to facilitate decision-making when it has been difficult for board members to meet face-to-face, and some board members believe this is working well. However, the use of email technology has its limitations in that it tends to inhibit the back-and-forth flow needed for reaching mutual understanding that is easier to reach in verbal communications. Another challenge with the use of email is that the intent is not always clear to all recipients whether a response was required or whether the purpose of the email was simply to share information.

### Communication

Of all the participant groups interviewed for the evaluation, governance group members were most likely to mention written forms such as meeting agendas and minutes, reports, various forms and newsletters as a means of communication (such reference to having an agenda distributed prior to governance meetings was noted most often). Subsequent to email, governance members referred to their meetings as a common strategy for communication, decision-making, and strategic planning. People talked about how the meeting process allowed for in-depth discussion and that representatives from meetings were able to express their perspective before feeding directly back into their respective groups (eg. service providers or crews).

Outside of the governance group meetings, communication between Mentors and the Governance Group (including the coordinator) was mostly through emails; with telephone calls being used as a back-up option when necessary.

With regards to the general communication process – there was consistency amongst the Governance Group members in their understanding of how communication flows throughout Phat Pak. They described the way communication moved between the GG and the collective through the Governance Group representative and the coordinator, and that mentors and representatives of the crews were part of the regional collective. They indicated that the coordinator brings information from the collective into the Governance Group and the representative then takes information to the collective and vice versa.

### Coordinator

Governance Group members talked about the skills and competence of the current person in the coordinator's role with regards to her ability to communicate with and link the Phat Pak members. They rated her communication skills and use of technology as very good; and were pleased with her availability, approachability, supportiveness, enthusiasm, and passion, constructiveness when dealing with any matters to do with Phat Pak. While the coordinator talked about her frustration at seeing little improvement in some areas, the active role the coordinator played in providing the link between the various groups within Phat Pak was discussed by participants.

The coordinator talked about the work that she and another long standing member of the Governance Group undertake in terms of the external relationships and communication. Such efforts were noted by the Ministry of Health participants who also acknowledged the strength of the relationship and an ability to communicate openly with the PPGG.

### *Skills Development*

There was general agreement that there certain skills needed and expected of an active governance group member. While some talked about their desire to want to

increase their skill level in different areas of governance, many felt that once a governance model was determined, such a process would provide a more formal process for assisting members to understand what skills they already had or where further training would be useful. Such a finding is consistent with the comments raised by members who expressed a desire to develop technical skills (such as financial management, business administration, proposal writing, funding applications, press release production or media liaison) and interpersonal skills (working with youth and different cultural, religious or social groups) but were not confident that such tasks were appropriate or relevant to their different roles within governance.

There was some suggestion that training (or a resource/information package) would be useful for current and incoming members. Such a process would ensure that all governance group members were informed of the policy, processes, roles and responsibilities of the governance group members and their respective roles. Along a similar vein, the Ministry of Health participants talked about the need for a skills development framework and how such a framework would be of benefit to Phat Pak. The MoH participants indicated their interest in being involved in such a process.

At the Mentor level, there was an identified interest towards being involved at the governance group level. However their interest was tempered by a lack of clarity as to what skills were needed to operate at the governance level, and whether there was some training process that would aid the transition to a governance role.

## **PHAT PAK PROGRAMME**

The following is a broad overview of the results that are more generalisable to Phat Pak. In this regard the comments are not directed towards the governance group, but are more in response to peoples' perceptions about Phat Pak on a more general programme level.

### *Participation as a Means to Enhance Skills*

Despite recent challenges experienced by Phat Pak in having youth participate in governance decisions, there is ample evidence that youth are involved in decision-making in other aspects of Phat Pak. Youth input has been generally sought and actioned. When asked about the aspects of Phat Pak encourage youth participation, Mentees and Mentors talked about how that they enjoyed attending various educational and team-building events. Another aspect of Phat Pak activities that include youth input was in the decision-making process of whom to take on as a new crew member. The process seemed to ensure that Mentees had key input into suggesting potential candidates for crew members.

Apart from the ability to solicit and action youth input, Phat Pak creates an environment where youth are confident that their input is valued. This highlights the two-sided issue of encouraging youth to speak up as well as valuing their opinions when they actually do speak up. That is, when youth feel as though their input is treated with respect, they are more likely to voice their opinions. Conversely, when people are not confident that their input will be treated with respect, they are less likely to speak up. One of the other factors that creates an environment where youth are comfortable speaking up is that of mentors being seen by Mentees as very approachable. The Mentees are confident about expressing concerns even about the mentors themselves. This attitude is in harmony with expectations of Ministry of Health, where Phat Pak is seen as playing a leading role in creating genuine youth participation in decisions affecting the community. Further evidence of the supportive environment for youth is observed by the mentors' awareness of other aspects and responsibilities that their crews are carrying, such as the roles their crews play at school, home, and in the wider community. These aspects are taken into account by the mentors when considering how their crews interact with Phat Pak agendas. A suggestion was made at the mentor level to get regional crews together more as a means to improve decision-making processes and increasing youth participation. There seemed to be general agreement that any issues adults within Phat Pak wanted to discuss were presented to the rangatahi in a way that encourages

and includes their input.

When Mentees were asked if they felt they were involved in decisions that affect them, and if their ideas are genuinely taken into consideration, they consistently replied with a confident “yes.” The processes used to make decisions was considered a democratic process that Mentees could submit ideas, discuss them as a team, and submit financial requests to the Phat Pak coordinator.

In terms of Mentor-Mentee relationships, Mentees noted being treated with respect rather than being told what to do; youth participation was encouraged in decisions made for Phat Pak. Mentees were aware that if they abused their privilege of being involved, they could potentially lose it.

#### Skill Development for Youth

With regards to skills development for youth, such a notion is difficult to achieve if the youth are not participating. Phat Pak was described by many participants as an initiative by youth for youth. Mentors play a really important role in encouraging and supporting the skills development by acknowledging where young people are at as well as providing them with strategies to move through barriers. In addition Mentors considered that they were there to support youth involved in the Phat Pak project as long as they are promoting the messages of Phat Pak and youth health development. Mentees are seen to be supporting their peers – encouraging participation and access to opportunities to learn new skills. They also indicate a desire to learn and become good role models for their peers.

From a Funder perspective, it was essential that this willingness to learn be harnessed further. The need to target specific populations of youth so that as well as recognising diversity in skill levels they indicated that there is benefit in targeting specific ethnic populations in terms of how the message is delivered. Such a notion was supported by the Mentors and crews who recognised their own cultural uniqueness as something that could be shared with other crews to enhance learning of cultural diversity.

Overall there was clear agreement about the factors that can hinder skills development in youth; such as the impact of low self-esteem on the ability of a young person to gain from available opportunities. Such a process was also linked to the effectiveness of the mentor for the youth. People generally considered that if a mentor was motivated and committed to their role they were more likely to walk alongside youth that were having trouble opening up until a relationship was established that allowed for the youth to feel comfortable that they could share their concerns with the hopes to find strategies to manage a process for change.

### ***General Skills Development***

The growth of Phat Pak from being simply a health promotion resource for youth to a fully fledged youth health and development project means that it has more potential to provide opportunities for skills development amongst the people involved. Both Governance Group members and Funders talked about the potential for young people who move through the different levels of Phat Pak, to develop skills within these different roles. The variety of roles for youth within Phat Pak as they progress through different roles were noted for their relevance to the wider community (such as beyond just within Phat Pak).

Phat Pak events provide social environments that encourage participation of youth and hence an opportunity to engage them in activities that promote and support skills development – socials, performances, workshops.

There were several references to the positive outcomes for young people as a result of the skills and knowledge they have gained from Phat Pak. Such examples included stories about the development of a clear career pathways and for others entry into ongoing education opportunities. As a result of such stories there was a call to celebrate the positive outcomes and the work that the young people undertake. At the Funder level there was recognition that not enough celebration of successes seemed to be apparent and so recommended an opportunity to be made for this to happen. The evaluation has found that there is much to celebrate in the work of Phat Pak and



there are many young people within the project who have skills and knowledge to share. Such an opportunity would allow for management and youth alike to be able to celebrate and learn about the work and messages of Phat Pak.

Many of the participants talked about the development of their confidence and ability to talk to others - in particular to young people and/or to a large group - as a result of their involvement with Phat Pak.

### Governance

Amongst the PPGG there was recognition of the need to better support Mentors and Mentees to contribute to decision-making and communication processes, which in turn would better enhance skills development.

Skills, knowledge and training (both desired and required) was discussed by participants who identified the need for development in a range of human resource skills such as succession planning and recruitment; leadership training including communication skills and methods to maintain confidentiality.

### Mentors

Many of the participants including the Mentors themselves talked about their skill in working with youth and how important that was in their role as well as others who are part of Phat Pak. One Mentor described how they encourage young people to participate through role modelling respect and maintaining their own integrity, not buying into inappropriate behaviour but responding by modelling how it should be done. This same Mentor uses humour in their work with young people. They consider it a key strategy in working with youth.

Clearly a significant skill of this group of Mentors is the recognition of and ability to encourage young people to move on from Phat Pak. While they don't abandon

them, they clearly give the young people who are considered competent, a gentle nudge in order to make way for others to follow in their footsteps and have access to similar developmental opportunities.

Mentors talked about their need to develop systems and methods to bring new people on board. Leadership training is clearly an obvious and ongoing need for this particular programme and this was reinforced by the expressed wishes of Mentors for more of this type of skills development. Further development in cultural awareness and specifically in Māori protocol in addition to further enhancing skills in advocating, supporting and guiding youth was discussed. As part of their role as Mentors within Phat Pak people recognised the importance of encouraging and facilitating personal growth and development for themselves as well as for others within Phat Pak.

### Mentees

An identified need to resource Mentees with further skills to speak with confidence to parents was specifically noted by Mentors. Such comments were in response to working with youth to identify methods to maintain the confidentiality for youth while supporting them to seek the assistance they require. In conjunction with this Mentees themselves talked about the need to learn how to talk to the parents of rangatahi who were receiving the Phat Pak. A Funder highlighted during their interview that youth are getting younger in terms of their knowledge about sexual behaviour and the suggestion was made that work needs to happen around getting real about this dynamic. These findings suggest that there is a need for expansion to the training for the youth who are delivering the Phat Pak message in terms of their audience. While the previous section acknowledges that they have some skill in pitching their message to a specific audience it is noted that their audience may potentially expand.

## *Communication Strategies & Decision-making Processes*

Passing information across all levels of the organisation in order to make decisions, Phat Pak members seemed in agreement that the general chain of communication was from the governance group to the coordinator who then passed on information to the mentors who then shared such knowledge with their Mentees.

The range of communication strategies varied between the different groups; with more email being the primary method within the governance group; whereas for Mentees and Mentors, texting via cellphone or posting via a bebo website were recognised as the most effective methods to reach the youth. At the regional collective meetings teleconferencing had been introduced as a method to counter the lack of participation experienced at that level.

Monthly crew meetings were important for Mentor-Mentee discussions (and decision-making), and Mentees communicate out to the community via word of mouth word of mouth, and use pamphlets, and flyers. Amongst the Mentors there appeared to be clear understanding about how the lines of communication work (as a means of information sharing as well as a decision making process). The importance of such a practice for ensuring that consultation with the youth was required in order to make decisions was recognised by mentors. It was noted that Mentors were proactive in working towards the aim of ensuring that the ideas and perspectives of the youth in their respective regions are represented on the regional collective and at governance.

At a broad programme level, there appeared to be confusion about whether Phat Pak had a website. Some participants believed there was one, while others believed there was not. Overall however, there was agreement that a website was recommended as a good strategy for communication.

Networking was seen as an important part of the communication strategy for mentors in terms of disseminating information as well as gathering it. The networks provide the people for the project, and Mentees then disseminate the message. Both within and external to Phat Pak, mentors make use of their other roles and positions as well as supporting the Mentees to access community networks. For one group their

networks extended internationally. Networks within schools were identified as a key contact for encouraging youth to participate in Phat Pak.

Funders discussed the process of formal meetings following the receipt of accountability reports as well as informal meetings with Phat Pak; such as attending Governance Group meetings as well as meeting informally with a Governance Group member. They also talked about meeting with provider organisation managers in regard to their representation at Phat Pak meetings where this may be an issue. Meeting informally with providers to forewarn of any changes coming in terms of contracting, was noted as a key strategy that Funders do with their clients.

### ***Phat Pak Resource***

While participants were not asked directly about the significance of the Phat Pak resource, most made some reference to it in terms of supporting the development of communication skills or the appropriateness to “speak” to youth. As a result of the commentary made, we have included a section about the resource here.

Several members of the Governance Group talked about the significance of the resource and how important it was to keep it updated and relevant to today’s youth. Further they acknowledged the benefits to skill development and communication simply through the development and dissemination of the resource. While the resource was a strength the suggestion at governance level was that there needed to be more events to distribute the Phat Pak message. Such suggestions were made in response to the importance of the messages contained in the resource and how it allows youth to make informed choices.

The opportunity for youth to communicate through events such as the launching of the new resource in 2006 where Phat Pak held a large promotion during youth week at the Performing Arts Centre at the University of Waikato was described. As a result of that experience people referred to a need for media training about how to

communicate the Phat Pak message appropriately through the media.

Mentors talked about how the Phat Pak resource supported the development of skills for the youth as well as demonstrated good communication strategies by simplifying language and presenting the information in a variety of languages; the Phat Pak message wasn't as much about teaching the Mentees, but to allow them to explore and learn themselves.

The evolution of the resources was noted by Pacific Island youth who talked about their concerns previously about how the focus of the previous Phat Pak resource did not acknowledge other cultures (beyond Māori) within the Waikato region. Since then the resource has subsequently been redesigned to include other languages and to appeal to members of other cultures, which people were happy with.

Ministry of Health commented on the invitations that Phat Pak crews had received to attend events outside of the region, specifically at how the crews have taken the lead in delivering the message successfully. The Ministry staff complimented Phat Pak in doing a “very good job in terms of getting their communication [across] successfully.” The importance of looking internally was not lost to Funders, who also talked about their expectation that the Phat Pak health message be broadened out and should also “include the family and whanau in these activities” for the main reason that the youth go back to their families and communicate with them daily.

### ***The Provider Role***

Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) have been developed to try to increase participation in PPGG by service providers. While there is recognition of the other commitments and priorities (time and geographical location are factors in lack of participation in GG meetings by some providers), there is room for improvement in number of service providers attending meetings regularly. Ensuring a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities for participating (and suggested ways

to manage their involvement such as writing reports before meetings) could be better managed and is understood to be achievable.

People talked about the potential difficulty with regards to understanding the role of service providers (some of whom are contracted by the Ministry of Health directly or through other service providers), which was somewhat exacerbated by the overlap and blurring that occurred between board and management roles at the governance level.

There was talk about how a youth advisory group could inform both the governance group and the regional collective. While people recognised the need for such a to have some flexibility to feed into the development of things like the strategic plan, and participate in decision-making around issues such as this, the potential professional development for Mentors and Mentees was seen as beneficial. Only slightly recognised was the potential for confusion in terms of whose goals take precedence (Phat Pak or the collective with service providers). As with the PPGG, the lack of clarity as to how the regional collective group contributes to decision-making and communication in Phat Pak was also recognised.

## **CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this section is to examine, interpret, qualify, and evaluate the findings and, where applicable emphasise theoretical consequences of the results. Such a task involves examining the present findings, considering the implications of those findings and then to make comment with regards to literature.

If the results chapter answered the question “What did the evaluation find?”; the discussion chapter answers the questions “So now what?, What more is to be explored? How might Phat Pak approach things differently in the future?”

In this section the evaluators will outline how the project was worthwhile in that we have found matters of common understanding, new knowledge as well as diverse views, which can contribute to the future direction for Phat Pak. In order to do so, we have incorporated the following broad areas within this chapter of the report.

- Reference to the aims of the research evaluation
- Reference to the goals and strategic plan of Phat Pak
- Significance of the inter-relationship of the four themes and the difficulty in separating out

This section will reference the above and the literature as we discuss the results and analysis that emerged.

### **GOVERNANCE**

#### ***Clarity about the Role of the Governance Group***

Findings from this evaluation of the Phat Pak indicate that there is some confusion about the role of the PPGG, both by it’s own members and potential newcomers. In particular there is a need for clear definition between strategic and management

roles. The operations and processes have a significant impact on the PPGG's relationship with the Phat Pak Coordinator, and the ability of the Coordinator to carry out their job. There appears to be no singular or clear 'model' of governance against which decisions are being measured; apart from the requirement that there must be a quorum of four governance members in order for decisions to be made.

Our analysis suggests there is a gap in terms of strategic work being done by the PPGG, such as the formation of Phat Pak policies and strategic planning. The results suggest that this may be due to the lack of participation on PPGG by service provider representatives, as the minutes from board meetings demonstrate the struggle they have experienced in making decisions when a quorum is not in attendance. However, the minutes also show that time is being spent on issues relating to Phat Pak operations, which could otherwise be spent on policy development. This again points toward the need to clarify the role of the PPGG in order to better define where the tasks of governance and management sit. When the governance model is determined, time should then be dedicated to the professional development of current and incoming PPGG members. This step is essential to ensure that people in roles within governance and management are clear about their role and responsibilities and, as well, are articulate in conveying to newcomers the function of the PPGG.

Assumptions that Governance is strategic by virtue of its title needs to be demonstrated in what the group does. If that perception is correct there needs to be a process of strategising and developing policies and procedures including, from our the emphasis given in the data we analysed for the evaluation, skills development strategies, particularly developing skills for working with youth as governance members. Not only is this supported through this evaluation but it already exists as a key Phat Pak objective. A Ministry of Health Funder identified that youth will be less inclined to participate in a group such as PPGG if it is not clear what that group is 'doing'. The potential impact of clarifying the governance roles may result in the desired across the range of participant groups as members become more aware of the specific skills and roles of each position; the team is hopeful that such a process will also see an increase in youth participation as awareness is raised. Some governance members asserted that the role of governance should be to ensure that the vision and



kaupapa of Phat Pak is kept alive, which fits in with the understanding within governance that it is a strategic group for Phat Pak.

While policies are being developed to provide clarity for operational procedures, there is also a need for policy that clarifies the nature of the relationship between the governance group and the coordinator, which clearly distinguishes them from each other. The results indicate that the current lack of policy distinguishing these roles is affecting people in both roles' and their ability to provide a unique contribution. For example, Carver (1997, p.9) notes that one of the common issues faced by boards is "spending time on the trivial," where boards spend time discussing issues that can easily be taken care of by people performing other roles in the organisation. Our examination of past minutes from board meetings revealed instances where the board is approving the payment of basic operating expenditures, and such a function could easily be performed by the coordinator, whose job it is to supervise the project's operations. In the meeting minutes we also noted a discrepancy between the policy of financial decision-making powers of the coordinator by the PPGG (up to an agreed limit) and the practice of decisions being made by the board on amounts less than this amount.

The literature supports the need for a group such as Phat Pak to have a clear model of governance that is followed, and for board members to focus only on matters that boards alone can uniquely address. Carver and Oliver's (2002) 'Policy Governance' model emphasises the idea that governance boards can be powerful and visionary leaders, while empowering management to perform their function in the organisation in an accountable manner. Carver (2002) recommends an all-or-nothing approach to applying the policy governance model, since "complete systems are best used completely" (p. 118). However, he also recognises that sometimes certain circumstances can prevent the immediate adoption of the complete system, and that a board may at least wish to move towards those ideals. In such a case, Carver recommends doing the following things:

- Create a definition of the owner value for which the CEO will be held accountable, and list the major business risks to be avoided.
- Make a clear distinction between board decisions and individual director

advice (the former being mandatory and the latter optional from management's perspective)

- Have the chief governance and chief executive roles separately defined and held separately accountable to the board, even if the roles are performed by one person, under whatever title.
- Conduct regular board evaluations.
- Routinely investigate and discuss the board's process of governance and options for its improvement. (Carver, 2002, p. 119)

Buck's (2007) Sociocratic Model ensures that decisions made at governance levels are truly informed by all those involved at any level in an organisation who execute governance decisions. If models such as these are followed, this will ensure that Governance processes are more efficient and effective for the Project.

## **THE LEVEL OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION**

One of the main reasons for undertaking this evaluation of Phat Pak was because of concern about the level of youth participation in the Project. Results indicate that there is a genuine desire for youth to participate at the Governance level by Governance members, but that there has been a slow decline since 2005 in youth participation in governance and the number of Phat Pak youth crews operating. Several ideas to address this decline are being explored such as Memoranda of Understanding, an advisory group, and other youth group models.

A key aspect shown from the evaluation of Phat Pak was the need to address the reduction in youth numbers at the governance level. The idea of a separate youth forum such as an advisory group allowing them to participate in forming policies has been welcomed by some PPGG members; being seen as a positive move to increase youth participation in governance. However it is important to note that clarity of the role of the PPGG is required to ensure that any initiative such as the advisory group is successful, as the role of an advisory group would relate directly to the role of Governance. This touches on the broader issue of the relationships between all Phat Pak groups needing to be defined in order to best utilise available resources.

Our analysis of the organisational diagrams drawn by the Governance members revealed that the PPGG do not see a direct relationship between them and the Regional Collective, even though the formal organisational diagram provided to the evaluation team showed a direct link. Governance members positioned the Coordinator between them and the Collective, which suggests there may be limited access between the two groups. If there is a strong, direct relationship between the two groups, we would expect the diagrams to illustrate this connection. Molina (2001) explains that the formal organisational chart defines the relationships between groups within an organisation and who should communicate with whom. If there is a perceived lack of direct relationship between groups, this could affect the perception of available resources. Ibarra (1993) shows that when there is limited access between groups in a network, there is a concurrent restriction of knowing what is going on in each group. Whether this is a result of or a contributor to the waning involvement of youth in governance meetings is not known. However, this may be an area that Phat Pak leadership could focus on to ensure all available resources are being maximised.

In the past, measures implemented to increase the numbers of youth on the PPGG, such as holding meetings at different times of the day have not achieved the desired outcome. In the literature, it is pointed out that having rangatahi involved in policy decisions in organisations such as Phat Pak meets the standards of international efforts to promote youth voice while being respectfully entertained and not feeling pressured (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002; U. N. C. R.C, 1989; Mathews, Limb & Taylor, 1999).

The findings indicate that one of the problems in getting the youth to attend governance meetings centres around travel and time constraints. Having to make an extra effort to attend meetings appeared to be a commitment that was too difficult to meet or maintain. Also, many youth were bound by other commitments that required more attention, such as cultural groups and sports teams. Although teleconferencing has been implemented to facilitate youth involvement, it has shown little improvement in the situation, but it is acknowledged that this is a new initiative and that it may require more time in order to determine its effectiveness. The suggestion of a youth advisory group may be an approach which addresses the desire for better

youth involvement in governing/policy development initiatives and according to Wang and Burris, (1997) their involvement is essential if policies are to be meaningful for them.

During the interviewing process youth have indicated a willingness to be part of policy making, but have felt inadequate and bored while attending governance meetings. A separate advisory group may act as a facility for youth to air ideas in relative safety. Similarly it may provide a much needed forum to explore new ideas found through networking with other organisations, about what works for similar projects in other locations. Suggestions from some participants indicted that this group could potentially provide youth advice for other agencies or councils so a wider audience may also increase its capacity through that exposure. Access to current trends and opportunities for youth to develop governance and strategic skills are all potential benefits of such a group.

A final point of discussion in relation to the role of the PPGG has to do with the project's mission statement. Carver (1997) holds that boards are responsible for carrying the vision and mission of an organisation. Our analysis of archival material revealed that the project has different statements regarding its purpose or mission. The project's stated Goal and Objectives did not once mention the word "youth," even though the whole project is about youth. In contrast, the header statement in several of the minutes from governance meetings describes the project as; "helping create positive environments for our youth in our communities so that youth are able to own their own journey of health and well being." This statement appears throughout the 2006 minutes but not in the 2007 minutes notes, which suggests this is not an established mission statement. At any rate, the disparity between the project's stated Goal and Objectives, and the statement in the minutes reveals a need for an agreed mission statement to guide the project. Bart, Bontis & Taggar (2001, p. 19) claim that mission statements are "regarded as the critical starting point for almost every major strategic initiative" for an organisation. Furthermore, if an organisation's members are not clear on their mission, they are prone to getting caught up in details that can throw an organisation off track (Jones, 1996). It would seem prudent, therefore, for the PPGG to clearly establish a single, clear mission statement for the project that

could be carried by every member of the project. Jones also states that a good mission statement should comprise three simple elements:

1. It should be no more than a single sentence long.
2. It should be easily understood by a twelve year old.
3. It should be able to be recited *by memory* at gunpoint (Jones, 1996, p. 3)

We therefore mention this point in the recommendation chapter of the report.

## **DECISION-MAKING AND COMMUNICATION**

It is important to recognise that communication processes need to be robust for collective decision-making in organisations such as Phat Pak, and particularly in this context, where youth perspectives within the decision-making process are essential to achieve the projects objectives.

Findings show that a variety of different communication techniques are used over the different levels in Phat Pak. These were primarily meetings and emails for the PPGG – and recently teleconferencing has been used to try to increase participation in Governance meetings, though we believe it is too early to say whether this has been successful or not. Certainly some participants indicated hope in its potential to work well.

The results indicated that there are discrepancies in the understanding of communication processes, and even the existence of useful communication tools such as a website. Some participants said that much of the email traffic appeared to be vague, in that, there appeared to be no set instructions attached for recipients explaining what was required in terms of a response such as whether it was purely information sharing or whether the comments required a response. These emails appeared to create unnecessary confusion, and in some instances annoyance.

The findings also indicate that the use of communications technology across the Phat Pak Project, from governance to rangatahi, is not necessarily targeted to systems

which convey messages and information in a way which is relevant to youth. The literature explored in the review indicates that young people in New Zealand have access to technology such as personal computers, whether at school or at home (Gallagher, Bagin & Moore, 2005). In order for young people to participate in communication processes in Phat Pak, it will be important that communication processes are easily accessible and relevant to youth.

Findings also indicated that the Coordinator has a significant role in the communication of information across all levels of Phat Pak, for example, from Governance to Coordinator to Mentors to Mentees and vice versa, whereas Mentees communicate the Phat Pak message to youth in the community. The Coordinator therefore has a very important role in being able to feed information from Governance to the Mentors and Mentees, and to feed information from Mentors and Mentees into the PPGG. The level of skill and ability that the current Coordinator has, was constantly reinforced throughout the interview process, in particular their ability to interact with the diversity of individuals and groups within the Project.

## **THE PROGRAMME**

Since its inception in 1999, Phat Pak has grown into a popular youth project in the Waikato, with satellite projects established throughout the broader region. The Project's success has required a broadening of the service from being purely an educational project in 1999 for ensuring youth safety over the millennium summer period to now being a youth health and development project providing youth peer mentoring and youth peer-led community activities.

The results indicate that the project has created opportunities for youth in our community to meet many of their needs. These include an increased self-confidence, a sense of choice in the decisions that affect them, an ability to contribute to the wellbeing of their peers, access to a wide network of support, and a safe place from which they can seek counsel about issues that are difficult to discuss with others.

These also meet the principles of the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002, p. 8), which contribute to positive youth development by creating a:

- “sense of contributing something of value to society
- feeling of connectedness to others and to society
- belief that they have choices about their future
- feeling of being positive and comfortable with their own identity.”

Phat Pak’s rapid growth, however, has possibly played a part in the project not having a Governance Group established until 2005 – a vital organisational structure with the chief responsibility of developing comprehensive policies to guide all the project’s activities. Such policies are not yet available 24 months after establishing the PPGG. This explains many of the issues discussed by the interview participants when asked about what aspects of the project hinder youth participation.

### *Skills Development*

Helping youth develop skills and attitudes that enable them to participate positively in society is the central theme of the Youth Development Strategy (Ministry of Youth Development, 2002). This is certainly provided by Phat Pak, where youth have opportunities to develop various skills depending on the different roles they perform. Mentees develop the ability to speak publicly and to participate in all aspects of organising community events, including budget considerations, obtaining sponsors, hiring venues, and tailoring different Phat Pak presentations to different audiences including peers and adults from DHBs and the Ministry of Health. People involved get the opportunity to learn and interact with people from different ethnic groups which raises their cultural awareness and sensitivity, and to express their emotional life with confidence.

Mentors learn skills around leading crews while at the same time recognising younger people’s need for autonomy to determine how they promote the Phat Pak message. Mentors also learn to represent their crew’s interests when negotiating with Phat

Pak leadership and other adults, and they are intimately involved in every aspect of their crew's development – even to the point of determining when is the right time to gently push them out of the “nest” to make room for new Mentees to join their crew. These more subtle skills tend to focus more on diplomacy, empathy, and other social skills and are recognised by newcomers as an important reason for wanting to participate in the Phat Pak Project. As one interviewee said, “*Rather than what was actually tried to be um, taught to them, so to speak. It was actually how they got treated*” (Mentor). These skills are not easy to develop, but mentors have the opportunity to do so through attending educational wānanga and participating in the regional collective, where they learn skills specific to their mentoring roles and network with other mentors.

Various barriers to skills development were also identified in the interviews, and these include extreme shyness, low self-esteem, other personal and community commitments, as well as a lack of motivation by the Mentors. While some barriers are clearly practical in nature, others depend heavily on the attitude of the Mentor and the quality of their relationships with Mentees. This is a crucial factor in determining the effectiveness of any Mentor-Mentee programme (DuBois et al, 2002), and it is one that Phat Pak leadership take very seriously, carefully choosing their Mentors with these considerations in mind.

As youth participate at more strategic levels in the project, they develop skills relating to policy and report writing, strategic thinking, networking, and organisational skills, thus strengthening the required skills to participate confidently in board meetings. The nature of governance does not seem common knowledge among younger members in Phat Pak. One mentor expressed an interest in participating in board activities but did not know what skills were required. This perhaps reveals a need for a readily available resource that describes the board's unique function, the necessary skills for participation, and how one might go about acquiring these skills. An understanding of the nature of governance may also be enhanced by increased interaction between the board and the crews. Minutes from board meetings revealed the Regional Collective wants to meet once or twice a year with the PPGG to get to know who they are.



Skills development opportunities could be enhanced through the development of a strategic plan that provides a clear pathway through which youth could develop. This would reinforce the current opportunities already inherent in the Phat Pak structure and build on its capacity. It may include networking with local education providers, a needs assessment may build on the areas already identified in this evaluation as gaps in required skills. Being strategic about the planning for development of youth skills fits well with the goals of Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (YDSA) (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002). One of the Funder interviews revealed the possibility that future contracts may include a provision for providers to include such a strategy.

### *The Role of the Provider*

While Phat Pak Mentors and crews work as an independent unit in the promotion of health safety messages, they are attached to a health agency within their local community. As a provider the agencies have certain contractual obligations relating to Phat Pak, such as attending meetings and providing quarterly reports, and these are indicated in the recently agreed Memorandums of Understanding between Phat Pak and service providers. It seems however that beyond the obligations of attending meetings and reporting to Phat Pak some of the Phat Pak crews may benefit from their provider agency having a better knowledge and understanding of the promotional work they undertake. The Ministry of Health Funders reported they have an expectation that youth will participate in local councils to ensure their voice is represented. However, they also noted that the support of the agency management to allow and resource this to happen in some instances was lacking. Therefore, Phat Pak Mentors' and crews' ability to participate and be part of decision making is somewhat dependent on the degree of support provided by their provider management. The literature highlights the importance of this involvement for the development of the young people's sense of citizenship, being able to contribute through problem solving and decision making (Flanagan & Van Horn, 2001). The significance of the role of adults and their relationships with young people is also indicated as relevant and meaningful to the promotion of youth wellbeing (National Collaborative on

Workforce and Disability, no date.).

Several opportunities are apparent from this aspect of the evaluation. As one participant suggested, showcasing the work of Phat Pak and the skills of the young people involved provides an opportunity to revisit the objectives and vision of Phat Pak while informing those in management roles of what they do and how they do it. It provides the opportunity to celebrate the relationships and capabilities of the young people doing this work and at the same time recognising where improvement or development is required. Providing an opportunity or event around this evaluation is suggested as one way to achieve this.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS**

Overall the evaluation has confirmed what Phat Pak already knew; this is an initiative that is built upon the passion and vision of people who are working hard to contribute to community well-being, but that there are a few key areas that need attention. The project has grown so much and over such a short time frame that there is a need to ‘check back in’ with its aims and objectives is needed. The success thus far has been part of the driver for further growth and momentum and now that growth needs to be tempered until such time as clarity is achieved for all members of Phat Pak. A structure that will assist clarity in roles, functions, relationships amongst its members will not only be of benefit to members within Phat Pak, but will enhance dissemination about Phat Pak to the wider community.

Phat Pak has been infused with the spirit and energy of a lot of people who have been, and continue to be, involved with it. The regional flavour that is part of the programme is what makes it one that will not be easily replicated to other regions or even on a national scale. But there are definitely elements of Phat Pak that other programmes, providers and funders in other regions (or countries for that matter) could learn from Phat Pak. This makes documenting the progress of Phat Pak even more important as it consolidates what has been happening in these last two years. With the evaluation highlighting the strengths of the programme, and the areas that need further attention, any changes are part of the learning that is taking place both alongside and as a result of the evaluation.

The benefit of having an external evaluation conducted has been the ability of the team to engage with and look upon Phat Pak with ‘fresh eyes’. Team members had no previous involvement with Phat Pak and with the added benefit of being accountable to an external organisation, this meant that they were not clouded by previous relationships or long term investment within Phat Pak.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Following are a set of recommendations presented by the research team that is based upon our analysis of the various forms of data gathered throughout the evaluation. We acknowledge that some of these recommendations reflect suggestions that are currently being explored by Phat Pak so our mention here only serves to reinforce those suggestions. The recommendations are grouped in a manner that recognises two target audiences; those which specifically relate to the Governance Group, and those recommendations which are relevant to the Phat Pak programme in a more general manner.

### *Recommendations relevant at Governance Level*

#### Clarity of Governance and Management Roles

To address the ongoing need for clarity between governance and management roles, we recommend revisiting previous training in governance models that clearly distinguish board roles from management roles and to continue working towards this ideal. One such model is the policy governance model provided by Carver (1997), which clearly defines the governance role as one of policy development and leadership through vision, and the role of management (or coordinator in the case of Phat Pak) is to execute the policies and vision within prescribed bounds of authority developed by governance. We consider that clarification of these two roles would 'free-up' governance to perform a proactive leadership and strategic role; as opposed to what participants have identified as the governance group being distracted by operational/ management requests. One example where ambiguity exists is about the coordinator's powers to make financial decisions up to the agreed limit.

We anticipate that once a model of governance has been determined all current members will need to undertake professional development that allows them to participate appropriately and confidently in the Governance Group. The flow on affect, once a governance model is determined, will be for other groups within Phat

Pak (Co-ordinator, Mentors, Mentees and rangatahi) to understand the role and function of governance. In turn when trying to up-skill within Phat Pak recruitment will be a more efficient process and people are able to clearly understand what is expected of them within each stage of development.

A policy manual and training protocol will need to be developed for new members of the PPGG. The manual and protocol will be able to outline the determined governance model as well as the functions and processes. With the establishment of clear policies and procedures within the determined governance model a process such as that noted here would be of benefit to entire governance group to ensure clarity amongst all members; and the ability participate fully at the governance level.

Given the recommendations noted above, the evaluation team feel that it will also be important to document/track progress towards the determined governance model and clarification of management functions by the coordinator. Doing so will assist a process of reflection and with future evaluations will be a useful indicator of progress made and goals set. Determining clarity of governance roles and functions will be of assistance to the wider members of Phat Pak, but also in particular to the coordinator whose role involves managing the communications and therefore the relationship between the governance group and the crews across the region.

#### A Youth Voice at Governance

To address the need for ensuring a youth voice is present in governance decisions, we recommend establishing a youth advisory group. This may be achieved by utilising existing structures to perform a similar function. We note that minutes from Governance meetings show a preference to utilise already existing structures, such as the Regional Collective for this function. In establishing the advisory group Phat Pak need to be clear whether its purpose is as a youth **advisory group to Phat Pak** or as a **regional representative** youth advisory group to region providers. While the two can roles can complement each other, there needs to be clarity on how this will be

managed (and agreement on the part of youth) from the outset.

While the evaluation team agree that the youth advisory group may also be a resource for other regional organisations seeking youth input when developing youth-oriented policies and strategies, as noted above the process needs to be managed carefully. Whichever course is chosen, we believe it will be important to maintain a strong relationship with the Regional Collective through frequent consultation and interaction.

Before we move on to other recommendations, there is one final point to make. The evaluation team want to reinforce that the management of the roles and functions of such a youth group will need to be determined and clarified for all from the outset as the potential to do more harm than good for the youth involved in Phat Pak is at stake. Consideration for recruitment, responsibilities, communication strategies and lines of accountability will need to be negotiated with the youth. If the intention is for the forum to be managed and lead by youth, with a voice at governance level, then once its roles and functions are determined then youth will need to have control and resources to manage the process for themselves.

### *Youth Participation*

We note that Phat Pak have introduced teleconferencing in an effort to increase youth participation in governance decisions, and that initial trials have increased youth participation but not to the degree expected. Comments from interview participants note the difficulty with travel and the time of meetings given school and after school commitments of the youth members. There were also reflections about the difficulty of making governance activities more enjoyable and youth-friendly. In recognising that some aspects of meetings simply cannot be made 'fun'; there are a range of ways the governance group can manage the process as a whole. Some suggestions we offer include:

- Find ways to take the meetings to the youth in places they are more comfortable that are located at there region(s)

- In the short-term plan the agenda so where youth input on items is desired, these are clustered together so attendance is only needed for part of the meeting. A long term-strategy would be to aid youth to be actively involved for the entire meeting.
- Consider ways to financially resource youth to attend (eg. travel allowance, attendance fee, scholarships to go to youth leadership conferences overseas etc)

Notwithstanding the focus on youth involvement, there will be a need at the governance level to establish a more formal and systematic process for tracking progress on youth engagement to see if 1) governance has achieved a sustainable level of input and thus contributing towards the desired outcome; and 2) whether further measures are required to increase youth participation.

### ***Recommendations Relevant to Phat Pak in General***

#### Clarity of Mission, Goals and Objectives of Phat Pak

To address the issue of differing statements pertaining to the project's mission, goals, and objectives, a process of clarifying and distributing a single, clear mission statement that can be easily stated by each member of the Phat Pak project is needed.

#### Participating with Confidence in Phat Pak and Beyond

There are several areas within Phat Pak that require some planning in relation to skills development and capacity building in order to support Phat Pak members to participate with confidence and competence in their roles. It is therefore recommended that a strategic plan in skills development is established and implemented to address the project objectives.

To address the need for new members to be supported into their roles, whether on PPGG, the Coordinator, a Mentor, or Mentee, we recommend developing a training package or programme that provides a pathway of development to enable

participants to engage confidently and meaningfully in any role within Phat Pak. This resource would define the nature and expectations of the different roles within the project, and may be used as a skills development tool such as in a peer-mentoring process.

It is also recommended that a strategic plan include discussing with local education providers the idea of developing a comprehensive skills development programme. A programme such as this would provide the necessary skills by which members can participate confidently and competently in any of the project's roles as well as providing educational and career pathways outside of Phat Pak. Such a strategy would also need to address issues of access to these opportunities, such as geographical isolation, as identified in this evaluation.

#### Clarity in Communication

To address the need for clear communication, we recommend developing an agreement for practice related to email communications. This would define who should receive information, who should be involved in decisions, and what is required of the recipients. For example, emails would include a clear statement such as: "No response required" or "Response required by (date/time)." We understand this issue is currently being addressed within the project.

To ensure that there is a forum/ medium that all members of Phat Pak may access for consistent information we recommend that a Phat Pak website be developed. It is not clear from the data whether there is an independent Phat Pak website, therefore if there is, information on how to access it needs to be communicated to the rest of Phat Pak, and if there isn't we recommend it's development. This would assist the ability of Phat Pak to increase its public profile.



### Accountability Obligations

To address the need for regular updates from service providers so that Phat Pak can meet their obligations to provide the Ministry of Health with 6-monthly reports, we recommend developing a template for an update form to be completed and sent to the coordinator if service providers are not able to attend face-to-face meetings.

### Risk Management

To ensure the safety of participants at Phat Pak sponsored social events, we recommend developing a risk-management strategy that provides a clear step-by-step process. This strategy would account for the concerns expressed by young mentors when older youth arrive intoxicated at social events, and it would also maintain the agency of the mentors present at the event to exercise authority to protect the safety of the participants. We note that such a policy has already been discussed in minutes from governance meetings and may already be developed.

### Public Profile of Phat Pak and Youth Generally

To address the desire for Phat Pak to have a more visible public profile, we support the following suggestions from various interviewees:

- Increase the amount of community events promoting Phat Pak.
- Establish an online forum or website uniquely dedicated to the Phat Pak project. This might also include a log-in facility for sharing ideas between all levels of the organisation.
- Establish training events for Phat Pak crews to engage with media about how best to communicate the Phat Pak message.
- Explore the feasibility of an advertising campaign. While this was suggested only by one interviewee, others have suggested it would be desirable to somehow increase the public visibility of the project.

To address the need for sending consistent messages to, and about, youth we recommend meeting with representatives from various Ministry departments with youth portfolios to brainstorm ways of optimising each other's efforts. Possible benefits might include streamlining interagency communication, and ensuring all youth-related groups (both NGO and non-NGO) are equally informed of activities and developments occurring in the community.

To address the desire to celebrate Phat Pak's success stories, we recommend holding an event(s) where Phat Pak crews can share/present their activities. Such an event might include plenty of food, fun, and networking with representatives from various ministries, service providers, crews, NGOs, parents and relatives of the crews, and other appropriate guests. We note that the Governance Group had a similar event in December 2006 (see minutes 30Oct06), and we believe such a celebration would be beneficial for the whole Phat Pak organisation to serve as a reminder of the great work being achieved by everyone's efforts.

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